CANNIBAL ISLAND

H. E. Lewis Priday

THE TURBULENT STORY OF
NEW CALEDONIA'S CANNIBAL COASTS

THE AUTHOR

was born forty-six years ago in the Shakespeare Country, where he was bred, joining the staff of the "Warwick Advertiser" as a cadet reporter at the age of 16. He served with the B.E.F. as private in the London Rifle Brigade and lieutenant in the Duke of Wellington's Regt., being severely wounded and taken prisoner near Armentieres. Released from hospital at the beginning of 1920, he followed a doctor's advice and went to New Zealand to get fit. He taught at Wanganui, fished in Taupo, climbed Ruapehu and yachted up the North Auckland coast, and in 1924 followed the unbeaten All Blacks to England, saw many of their best matches and was presented with two autographed pictures of the team. Then came four years in Germany, Italy and France, as journalist and secretary to an

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CANNIBAL ISLAND

George W. Freeland Jr.

To Dad & mother with
love
George Jr.

New Caledonia 11 Dec 1944

CANNIBAL ISLAND

THE TURBULENT STORY OF
NEW CALEDONIA'S CANNIBAL COASTS

By

H. E. L. PRIDAY

Of antres vast, and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks and hills, whose heads touch heaven;
And of the cannibals that each other eat, the anthropophagi.

—"Othello"

A. H. and A. W. REED
WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

For
MARIE LUCAS,
Caledonienne
With grateful affection.

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FOREWORD

STRANGE new world of the South Pacific. Palms and jungle and half-savage savages. Ile Nou, Bourail, Tontoua; Vila, Espiritu Santo, the Banks; Santa Cruz, Tulagi, Makambo, Gavutu, Guadalcanal, Malaita, Ysabel, Rendova, Gizo, the Treasury Islands; Kieta, Buka, Faisi, Munda and Rabaul. De Quiros, Captain Cook, Bligh Bougainville, La Pérouse. Tiny ports, red-roofed bungalows, straw huts. Mosquitoes, missionaries and planters. Poinciniana, flamboyants, bougainvillea, hibiscus, exotic croton blooms. New Caledonia, the Hebrides, the Solomons, New Britain. White man, black man, half-caste. Pidgin French, pidgin English and the Lord's Prayer—"Papa, iu stap on top in place belong iu." Pilou-pilou, sing-sing, duk-duk, the totem pole. Witch-doctors and Pan-American Airways' giant clipper arriving in Noumea.

Such was the South Pacific I came to four and a half years ago; preceding Matheson's Australians, and Patch's American Division, followed by other units of Harmon's ground and Air Forces, Halsey's Navy, Vandergrift's Marines and Barrowclough's New Zealanders—in time for the Free French revolution. And as it was a strange new world to me, so it is to these upstanding men of a new war, who express their astonishment in unconventional language, between their work of building roads and airfields, loading and unloading stores, sailing convoys, fighting battles, dropping bombs and downing Zeros over age-old mountain jungle and shore-fringed coconuts.

No wonder their curiosity is stirred, as much by the past as by the present—the past of Old Melanesia. That past is not so distant, in fact it comes as something of a shock to find in Noumea—second town of the wide Pacific, howbeit somewhat less than up-to-date—people whose parents were poleaxed, as recently as 1917, by war-painted savages.

In these paper-short days one must find some sort of excuse for a book, apart from the best reason of all—the joy there is in writing one. Mine is that so little has yet been done to make New Caledonia known to her English-speaking neighbours. And to understand this island, which the Allies have found so strategically important, one must go back to its origins as a French possession, to the first real contacts between black and white.

Now, New Caledonia became a French Colony instead of an English one—adding to the diversity and attractiveness of Pacific life—because one hundred years ago almost to a day a small but stout-hearted band of French missionaries landed at Balade from the "Bucéphale." I have gone back to that historic event, and the little farther that seemed necessary to make the tale complete.

Imagine yourself, therefore, reader, as the curtain rises, back in the Stone Age, on an enchanted island peopled by head-hunting Calibans, while out beyond the great barrier reef Cook's "Resolution" swims into view, the young look-out disturbing the silence with his cry of "Land ahoy!"

NOUMEA,

New Year's Day, 1944.

The author's thanks are due to many New Caledonians who have advised and helped him in the writing of this book.

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CANNIBAL ISLAND

CHAPTER I.

STONE AGE

THE pre-history of the 250-mile long island of New Caledonia and its surrounding groups is that of wild and savage Melanesia. The inhabitants came originally from Southern Asia. Related to the Solomon Islanders, they were split up into many tribes speaking different dialects, interlarded particularly on the eastern side with words of Polynesian derivation, and lived in a state of chronic hostility with occasional periods of patched up peace. When Captain Cook discovered the main island there were over 200,000 of them. To-day they number less than 30,000.

They were ferocious head-hunters and cannibals, tall, muscular and naked, save for the "bagayou," long piece of coloured fibre rolled round their sexual parts to fall between their legs. They used to redden their huge mop of crispy hair with lime and bind it around with fibre to frustrate murderous axe-blows. They decorated themselves with war-paint, bodies black and faces smeared with ghastly stripes, red or white or blue, and wore arm and leg bracelets and hair ornaments of feathers, sea-shells, leaves and fibre.

The tayos, or warriors, carried weapons of hardwood and obsidian, deadly bird's beak tomahawks, bows and arrows, and slings with which they could kill even birds in flight. They relied on treacherous ruse and sudden massacre rather than on a stand-up fight, but the white man was to find them capable of meeting death in battle or from firing squad with unimaginative stoicism.

Cannibalism was indulged in as much from superstitution as from lack of meat, and they looked forward to their great cannibal feasts with the relish of the gormandiser. Choice morsels, such as human eyes and the breasts of nubile girl prisoners, were generally reserved for the chiefs, who also possessed more wives than the commonalty. Their women were little more than beasts of burden, forced to prostrate themselves and move aside when their lords and masters passed by.

To celebrate seed-time and harvest, war and peace, the death of an old chief or the accession of a new one, warriors would dance the pilou-pilou, terrifying corroboree during which they rolled their eyes, uttering gutteral and strident cries, and a whistle more sensuous and infectious than a negro jazz band, the while leaping in the air, shaking their haunches, and stamping the ground until it shook with their rhythm, surprisingly supple and tireless. At these orgies, which sometimes lasted for days, both cannibal and sexual hunger were satisfied. They practised circumcision of boys at the age of puberty in a place set apart in the bush, and this rite was followed by a pilou.

They lived by hunting and fishing and vegetable cultivation, also on coconuts and native fruits and berries, and the fat grubs to be found in dead and rotting vegetation. They were skilled agriculturists, and used to bring water long distances in irrigation channels and bamboo pipes. They were expert bushmen, possessed of the keenest sight and hearing.

Their outrigger canoes were dug out by fire from selected forest trees felled by primitive means and—as among the old New Zealand Maoris—dragged with chant and ceremony to the nearest waterway. There were rendezvous places where coast and hill tribes used to meet to exchange the produce of sea for that of bush and mountain. Their tribal villages were reminiscent of collections of old-fashioned beehives, and it was a point of honour that the chief's hut, with its crowning taboo in human shape, rose higher than the surrounding coconut grove.

Anybody wishing to enter into the thoughts, beliefs, modes of life and savagery of these tribes up to the time when white civilisation brought change and disintegration, should read "Légendes Canaques" and other stories by Georges Baudoux, finest writer the Colony has produced. Old prospector and trepang fisher, brought here by his parents at the age of five prior to the great kanak insurrection of 1878, he has lived much and solitarily among the natives in the north—last area to feel the effects of white penetration—and has listened to their stories with a sympathetic ear when no other white man was around.

A little known account of native ways which may be relied upon, mainly covering the tribes of the mangrove and silt-formed west coast plains, has been left by two lay brothers, one a Samoan and the other a Rarotongan, landed from the London Missionary Society ship "Camden" in April, 1840. They related their experiences on their return to Samoa in 1845.

The Caledonians reminded them of the Fijians (also ruthless cannibals), but only in colour and figure, the dialects being widely different. The people, as Cook had found, knew of no name embracing the whole island, but all was divided into separate districts and villages, with distinct names for each. War was the rule, peace the exception.

At the birth of a child the low hut doorway was set apart for the occasion, friends assembling in a circle outside. If it was a girl, she was betrothed forthwith to someone present, and at seven or eight years of age went to his house, and was taken care of by the family until she was older. If a boy, there were great shouts and rejoicings. The priest cut the umbilicus on a particular stone from Lifou, that the youth might be stone-hearted in battle. The priest, too, at the moment of operation, had a vessel of water before him, dyed black as ink, that the boy, when he grew up, might be courageous to go anywhere to battle on a pitch-black night; and thus from very birth the little fellow was consecrated to war.

Girls worked in the plantations. Boys learnt to fight. The people generally were trained to a keen sense of hearing. They listened to the ground, and could discern the tread of a party coming to battle when they were yet a long way off. Circumcision was practised "when the youth's whiskers reached the hair of his head." Lack of whiskers was considered a sign of wickedness, a curse from the tribal spirits, and the mark of an outcast. Chiefs had ten, or even twenty or thirty wives. The more wives the better the plantations, and the more food. Common men had one or two. No laws of consanguinity were observed in their marriages, the nearest relatives sometimes united. If a wife misbehaved, the chief did not divorce her, but made her work all the harder.

Taros, yams, coconuts, sugar-cane, fish, pigeons, bats, rats and human flesh were the prevailing articles of food. There were no pigs and little breadfruit. They cooked in earthenware pots manufactured by the women. They had no intoxicating kava like the Fijians, but drank enormous quantities of salt water. They worked in the morning until 11 o'clock, then rested, drank cup after cup of salt water until it operated; then cooked and had their midday meal—only one meal a day.

They had no clothing. Married women only wore a short fringe skirt of fibre. Disease-makers burned rubbish as at Tanna in the New Hebrides. They thought white men were the spirits of the dead, and brought sickness; and

gave this as a reason why they wished to kill them. If a man among themselves was suspected of witchcraft, and supposed to have caused the death of several persons, he was formally condemned. A great festival was held. He was dressed up with a garland of red flowers, arms and legs covered with flowers and shells, and his face and body painted black. He then came dashing forward, ran through them, jumped over the rocks into the sea, and was seen no more.

At death they dressed the body with a belt and shell armlets, and raised and cut off the fingers and toenails whole to preserve as relics. They spread the grave with a mat, and buried all the body but the head. After ten days the friends twisted off the head, extracted the teeth as further relics, and preserved the skull also. In case of sickness and other calamities they presented offerings of food to the skulls of the departed. The bodies of the common people as well as of the chiefs were treated thus. The teeth of the old women were taken to the yam plantations as a charm for a good crop, and their skulls were also erected there on poles for the same purpose. They set up spears at the head of a chief when they buried him, fastened a spear-thrower on to his forefinger, and laid a club on the top of his grave.

Their villages were not permanent. They migrated within certain points as they planted. There were fifty or sixty round houses in some villages. The natives had only stone-edge tools formerly. They felled their trees by a slow fire close to the ground; took four days to it, burnt off the branches also and, if for a canoe or house-post, the length of log required. If it was for a canoe they cut a hole in the surface of the log, kindled a small fire and burned down and along, carefully drop, drop, dropping water all around, to confine the fire to a given spot; and in this way they hollowed out their logs for the largest canoes.

The chief had absolute power of life and death. Priests did not interfere in political affairs. At death the chief nominated his successor, if possible in a son or brother. The law of private revenge allowed the murder of the thief and the adulterer. In a district neighbouring St. Vincent, the guilty parties to adultery were tried, dressed up, fed before the multitude and then publicly strangled. A man of the friends of the woman took one end of the strangling cord and a man of the friends of the man took the other.

The population was principally along the coast. The people thought they were more numerous then than for-

merly. They accounted for it by there being less war than in the old times. Still, it was war, war, incessant war! They said that formerly they did not stop the fight until one party was killed right out to the verge of extinction, but that of late they had become more merciful. They fought with clubs, spears and slings. They picked out the good bodies of the slain for the oven, and threw the bad away; they tied up the captive to a tree, dug a hole, and kindled a hot stone oven for his body before his very eyes.

The women went to battle. They kept in the rear, and attended to the commissariat. Whenever they saw one of the enemy fall it was their business to rush forward, pull the body behind, and dress it for the oven. The hands were the choice bits sacred to the priests. These went to battle, but sat in the distance, fasting and praying for victory. They fasted for days if they got no hands. If the body of a chief was cooked, everyone must partake, down to the little children, and before the gormandiser proceeded to polish the bones he called out, "Have all tasted?"

If it was the body of a woman, they generally ate only the arms and legs. On Maré (Loyalty Group) they devoured all. Sometimes they cooked in joints, and sometimes the whole body was doubled up in a sitting posture, with the knees to the chin, put into the oven, and served up so, as they squatted around for their meal. Their appetite for human flesh was never satisfied. "Do you mean to say that you would forbid us the fish of the sea? Why, these are our fish!"—thus was it they talked when one spoke against cannibalism.

Their gods were their ancestors, whose relics they kept and idolised. At one place they had wooden idols before the chief's house. The office of priest was hereditary. Almost every family had its priest. To make sure of favours and prosperity they prayed not only to their gods, but also, in a general way, to the gods of other lands. Fishing, planting, house-building, and everything of importance was preceded by prayers to their guardian spirits for success. This was especially the case before going to battle.

They prayed to one for the eye, that they might see the spear as it flew towards them; to another for the ear, that they might hear the approach of the enemy; thus, too, they prayed for the feet, that they might be swift for pursuing the enemy; for the heart, that they might be courageous; for the body, that they might not be speared; for the head, that it might not be clubbed; and for sleep, that it might be undisturbed by an attack of the enemy. Prayers over, arms ready, and equipped with their relic

charms, they went off to ambush or battle. The summum bonum of the New Caledonian was to be praised as a great warrior. The coward had neither food nor respect.

There was a rain-making class of priest. They blackened themselves all over, exhumed a dead body, took the bones to a cave, jointed them, and suspended the skeleton over some taro leaves. Water was poured on the skeleton to run down on the leaves. They supposed the soul of the departed took up the water, made rain of it, and showered it down again. They had to fast and remain in the cavern until it rained, and sometimes died in the experiment. They generally chose, however, the showery months of March and April for their rain-making. If there was too much rain, and they wanted fair weather, they went through a similar process, only they kindled a fire under the skeleton and burned it up.

The spirits of the departed were supposed to go to the bush. Every fifth month they had a "spirit night," or "grand concert of spirits." Heaps of food were prepared for the occasion. The people assembled in the afternoon, round a certain cave. At sundown they had a feast, and that over, one got up and addressed the spirits inside the cave: "You spirits within, may it please you to sing a song, that all the men and women out here may listen to your sweet voices?" Then out burst a strange unearthly concert of voices in which the nasal squeak of the old men and women was uppermost.

Those outside listened the while with delight, and praised the "sweet voices," and then got up and danced to the music. The singing increased with the dance, and then followed the other orgies of a night of unbridled license which, drinking excepted, would compare with the worst of the ancient bacchanalia. The "spirits" were the old men and women of the place, who slipped in unobserved during the day, and carried on the hoax upon the children and young people, who firmly believed that the spirits of the dead really assembled that night in the cave, and patronised the sports of the living.

The Caledonian inland sea between reef and shore abounds in sharks—some have been measured up to 25 feet in length—but some of the kanaks, says an old French writer, used to have a sort of protecting taboo from the Loyalty Islands with which they would rub their bodies before taking to the water, believing that the sharks would not then attack them.

From the Isle of Pines comes a Jonah-like story. The kanaks were about to kill a large shark washed up on the

beach when they heard a voice begging them to cut it up carefully. When the stomach was opened out came a woman whom fright had turned white. She related that when fishing at Canala, on the mainland east coast, the monster had swallowed her whole. Fortunately she had retained the sharp shell with which she was cutting up her catch, and with this she so lacerated the shark's stomach that he had been forced ashore in a dying condition.

Caledonian chiefs were obeyed unquestioningly. Old Canala natives used to relate how one had an immense raft built to his orders. At death his body was placed on this surrounded by four hundred of his bravest warriors and towed out to sea, where the raft was sunk. Few of the tayos made any attempt to swim ashore, and these were looked on as cowards. It is hard to establish the truth of such a legend, but the kanaks believed it themselves, such was their ancient respect for a chief's authority.

Reverence for an aliki or grand chief was such that a lesser man was proud to kill and cook a son or relative for him to eat. Well known to the whites in the early 1860's was an old petty chief of one of the northern tribes. In 1842 he had received a visit from the terrible chief of the Isle of Art, largest of the Belep Group. Wishing to offer such a guest the most delicate morsel within reach, he seized one of his subjects standing close by, and with the dexterity of Little Jack Horner inserted his forefinger and yanked out his eye. This princely gift was immediately presented to the big chief, who swallowed it with pleasure, congratulating his host on the excellence of his manners. The one-eyed victim of tribal generosity was still, in 1862, living in the neighbourhood of Balade, but to the end of his days he never ceased to venerate both the chief who had robbed him of his eye and the greater chief who had swallowed it.

CHAPTER II.

THE EXPLORERS

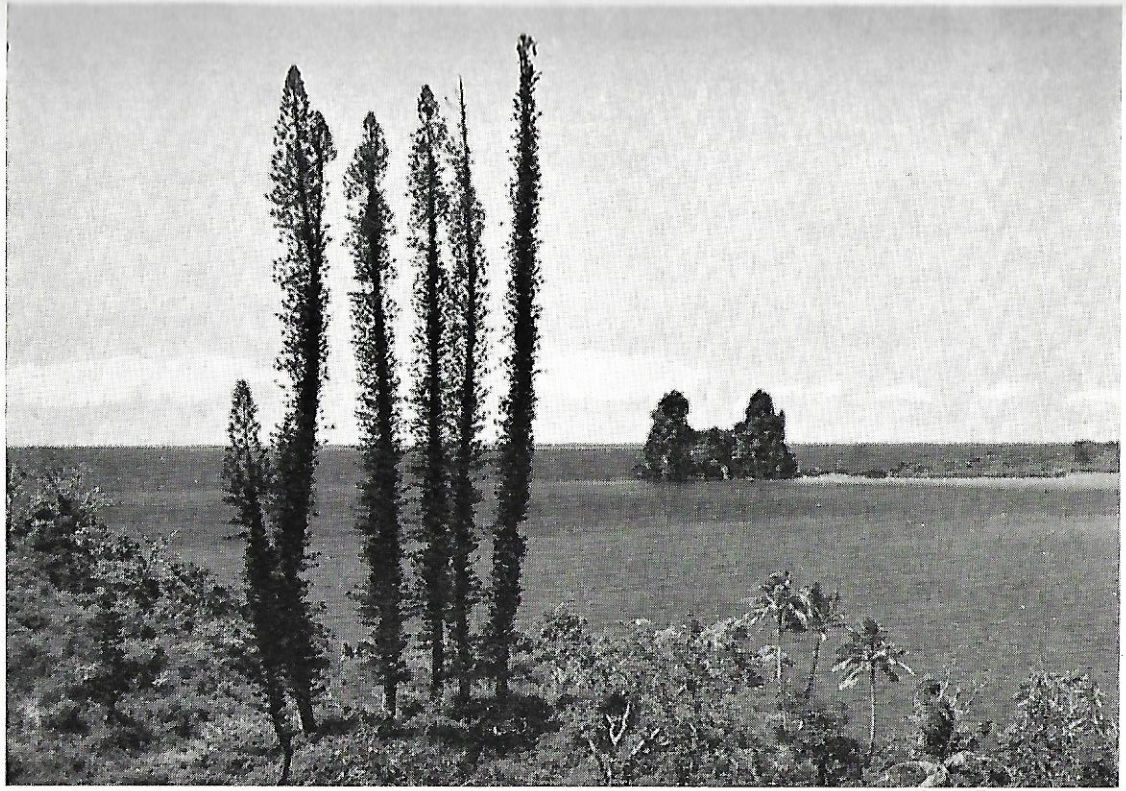
IN 1768, during his voyage round the world on the frigate "La Boudeuse" ("Sulky Girl"), Bougainville guessed the existence of land in these waters from vegetation floating in the Coral Sea, but was content to record his conjecture in his log. He never sighted the island.

Cook, following his indications, discovered and named New Caledonia on 4th September, 1774, struck with its resemblance to certain parts of the Scottish coast. The first land seen were the mountains which rise over 5,000 feet above Cape Colnett, so called after look-out man on the "Resolution."

Cook sounded along the outer reef seeking for a passage, and eventually anchored near the islet of Pondouié, north of Balade. Luckier than the French navigators who succeeded him, he got on well with the natives. They seemed to have plenty of food and to be at peace, and he does not seem to have remarked their cannibalism.

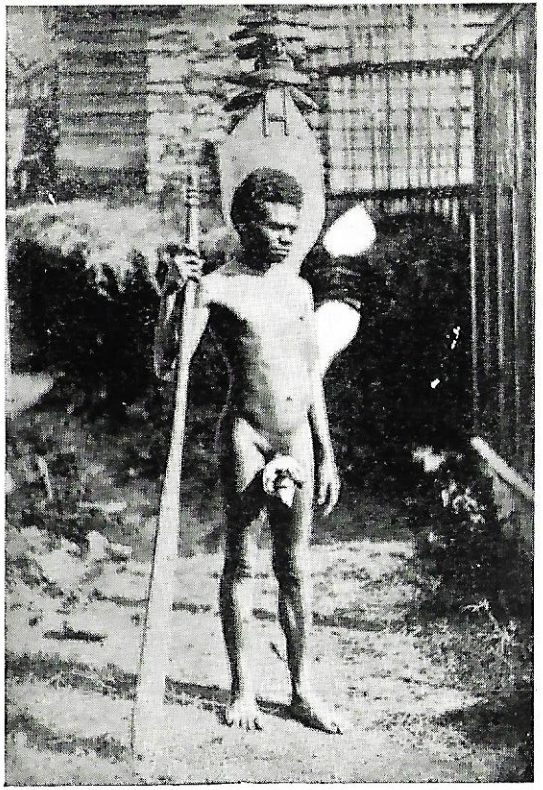
To commemorate his visit, the natives of the Bay of Baiup planted a grove of coconut trees. Children born during his visit were named after him, and if some of the adults changed their names for his it would have been in accordance with native custom. In 1846 the Catholic Père Montrouzier baptised an old kanak who bore the name of Captain Cook. He had been born in 1774, during the great navigator's visit. This priest also found at Balade a curious medal engraved with the names "Adventure" and "Resolution," which he gave to Governor Guillain in the hope that it would occupy a place in a proposed Noumea museum. However, the Governor seems to have passed it on to Prince Napoleon.

Cook's two vessels tried to double the island, but were prevented by that portion of the great barrief reef which extends far out of sight to the north-west into the Coral Sea; so turning back he drove south-eastward following the coastline. On 18th September, at Bayé, near Huailu, Cook saw what looked like the mast of a tall ship. In reality it was a solitary giant pine situated on an islet bare of other vegetation and whose only inhabitants were bats, notou pigeons and a few sea eagles. This pine, known as Cook's Pine, was still in existence a score of years ago when, according to Captain Mourquin of Noumea, "some idiot burnt it down." Speaking of bats, some of those which



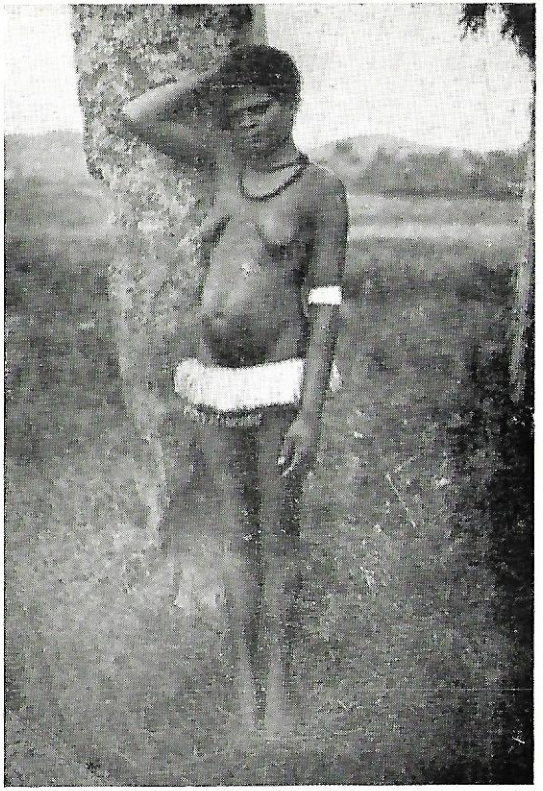
(Photo. Dunn, Noumea.)

The Towers of Notre Dame, Hienghène Bay. Three times larger than their Paris cathedral namesake, instead of gargoyles their limestone caves are haunted by equally grotesque giant bats, including a flying fox with a rat-like tail.



(From an early photograph.)

Caledonian Stone Age man wore nothing but the "bagayou". This one carries a native paddle and stands before the tribal totem-pole.



(From an early photograph.)

Caledonian Stone Age woman was man's slave, and sometimes wore a brief grass skirt.

inhabit caverns in the Huailu region are possessed of tails.

On 23rd September Cook discovered Kunié, which he renamed Isle of Pines on account of the great quantity of the prehistoric pins colonnaires (auraucaria Cookii) which one or two of the scientists in his party mistook at first for columns of basalt.

A week or so later Norfolk Island was discovered and named. It is strange to think that in three weeks Cook discovered three islands, all in the next century to become penal settlements.

Though it has nothing to do with New Caledonia, there is a good story of Norfolk Island belonging to the period covered by this book. In 1853 some of the descendants of the "Bounty" mutineers had not long been shifted there from Pitcairn—Norfolk's penal days having ended before those in New Caledonia began—when a ship called the "Clio" was forced to take shelter there in a storm. She was just about to continue her way to Sydney, when a boat pulled out to her through the rough water.

"They must be needing something rather badly," remarked Captain Sterling of the "Clio," adding as the rowers climbed aboard that he hoped no misadventure had befallen them. "Oh, no," came the reply, "we just thought you might be able to let us have the latest volume of Mr. Disraeli's 'Lothair.' "

In the same way the inhabitants of Perth would scan the horizon for a sail that might bring them the latest instalment of "David Copperfield," and the struggling citizens of Noumea would impatiently inquire for the most recent novel of Alexandre Dumas père. Incidentally, I have heard of a few descendants of the "Bounty" mutineers who lived in Noumea at a later date. Adams was the name of one of them, and another, whose name I have forgotten, was involved in a murder, a local cause célèbre.

In 1788 the French, aroused by Cook's discoveries, sent the corvettes "Lau Moussole" and "L'Astrolabe" under La Pérouse with instructions drawn up by Louis XVI. These asked for a reconnaissance of New Caledonia and its resources. Although the latest news of this expedition—which ended so disastrously at Vanikoro, and whose disappearance was not cleared up until 1828—was when it left Botany Bay, La Pérouse probably spent some time exploring the Caledonian coast. Noumea's secondary school is to-day called the Collège de la Pérouse, and his head is included with that of Bougainville on a Caledonian postage stamp.

"La Recherche" and "L'Espérance," under Vice-

Admiral Bruny d'Entrecasteaux, left Brest to search for La Pérouse. They arrived at the Isle of Pines in June, 1792, and for more than three hundred miles followed the reefs which border the mainland west coast, parts of which were charted by the hydrographer Beaumont-Beaupré. Leaving the "Grande Terre" behind, d'Entrecasteaux next adventured out north-westward along the great reefs which stretch hundreds of miles into the Coral Sea, enclosing an immense lagoon. Portion of these reefs bear the name of this explorer.

Towards one extremity lie the tiny Surprise Islands, consisting of Huon, Surprise, Fabre and Leleizour. The collective name records d'Entrecasteaux' astonishment at coming upon stretches of beach a foot or two above sea level when he had imagined he had already turned the reefs. Huon is named after Huon de Kermadec, commander of the "Espérance," who died on 6th May, 1793, at Balade. They buried him secretly at dead of night on Pondouié, Cook's observatory island, for fear the cannibals should dig up his remains.

In 1869 the Minister for the Navy ordered a gravestone to be erected on the islet on which were inscribed the words:—

ICI REPOSE
Le Chevalier Jean Michel Huon de Kermadec,
Fils de Jean Guillame et d'Anne de Mescan,
Né à Brest le 12 Septembre, 1748,
Mort a la Nouvelle Calédonie le 6 Mai, 1793.
Capitaine de Vaisseau et Chevalier de St. Louis.

This gravestone has disappeared, but some years ago Ernest Massoubre, now Mayor of Noumea, cast one in bronze at the instigation of Noumea harbourmaster, Captain le Fèvre, supported by public subscription. A photograph of this new tombstone was sent to the mariner's descendants at Brest. Huon de Kermadec had previously distinguished himself at the battle of Cuessant in 1778, at the taking of Granada and the siege of Savannah in 1779, and in the fighting under Admiral de la Motte against Admiral Parker, one of Nelson's admirals, on 20th and 22nd March, 1780. His death was attributed to fatigue resulting from the long voyage.

Fabre and Leleizour, the two other Surprise islands, were named much later by a Caledonian governor after two Noumea port pilots. The son of one of these, Mr. Leleizour, is still living in Noumea. In modern times Surprise has been intermittently worked by the Australian Guano Company of Melbourne, which also worked the Walpole

Island deposits, 150 miles from Noumea. Walpole Island is familiar to readers of Joseph Conrad's novel "Lord Jim," and that great writer has not exaggerated its barrenness, isolation nor lack of anchorage.

On the southernmost part of Fabre in 1874 an English ship, the "Maitland," of 1,200 tons, was lost en route from Sydney to China. The crew remained there five months and, incredible though it seem, did not attempt the comparatively short distance to New Caledonia. Instead, one boat left for Australia but was never more heard of. The captain and the rest of the crew built a second boat which in the absence of nails was tied with steel wire taken from the rigging of the wreck. Thanks to a description included in the log of these unfortunate men found in a bottle left hanging on a tree, this boat was identified later when picked up at Cape York Peninsula, but no trace was ever found of the captain and thirteen men who left Fabre with him.

Fate decreed that only five days after this second boat had left, Sam Miller, a New Caledonian fisherman, arrived at the goup in his whaleboat and came on the bottle. When Commandant Chambeyron was there a year or so later all that remained of the wreck was the bow. Camp, workshop, kitchen ashore were "all ship-shape," tools, saucepans, tents and planking having been slung in orderly fashion on the trees around.

Twelve months before the "Maitland," another British vessel, the "Plato," had been wrecked on the same spot. The crew took to their boats and made for the Solomons, where all were killed and eaten save one man who lived to tell the tale. The "Maitland" log recorded the finding on Fabre of a sawmill built by the "Plato" crew.

The vegetation of the Suprise Group is meagre in the extreme. The group is, however, the rendezvous of innumerable turtle of the edible variety, the shell having no value. Mr. Elmore, of Noumea, once foreman for the Australian Guano Co., tells me he used to feed them to his native workmen. Mutton birds were plentiful and had to be chased away with a stick. Sitting in their breeding holes ashore they could be caught by hand. It is said locally that the first load of guano ever consigned to Melbourne came from Surprise.

Some two hundred more miles into the Coral Sea lies the Chesterfield Group, another New Caledonian dependency. This group was discovered by an English ship of the same name in June, 1793. The principal isle is called Bampton. In 1877 Captain North, an English seaman domiciled at Noumea, explored the group in the hope of

founding a guano exploitation company. He informed the British Consul of his intentions, and was given a letter to the Governor-General in Australia recommending that the group should be declared a British possession. Tired of waiting, however, Captain North entered into partnership with an old colonist named Desmazures, and the French Governor, Admiral Olry, sent the man-o'-war "Seudre" to take possession in the name of France.

The Chesterfield reefs are 495 miles north-westward of Noumea. Since Pearl Harbour, they have been regularly flown over by Allied planes reconnoitring the Coral Sea. They consist of two long narrow barriers of coral meeting to form a V and then extending southward. The longest arm, the western, extends twenty-seven miles to the north-west and is only a quarter of a mile wide; while the eastern arm is nine miles long and half a mile wide. The islets are strung along these reefs; they are uninhabited stretches of sand and guano, with only one species of tree with knotty trunk and thick shiny leaves like the Caledonian bourao.

Bampton is a mile long by two hundred yards wide. The guano is light brown in colour, but though there is an estimated 100,000 tons available it is impoverished by rain and not nearly so rich as Chilian guano. Sea-birds of the wide Pacific—albatross, frigate-bird, and particularly mutton-bird—use it as a rendezvous, and make a great clamour flying about the head of anybody who lands. Clouds fly away at break of day to return at nightfall.

Like those further south, these reefs have seen many a shipwreck. There is no safe anchorage, so bad weather spells danger. To the north of the Chesterfields lie the Bampton reefs, while the Ballona reefs, linked to the Chesterfields by shoals, lie sixty miles to the south. Timber from wrecked vessels provided materials for house, wharf and distillation plant once installed on the Chesterfields by the old Noumea firm of Higginson & Cie, which worked guano in the 1880's. American airmen tell me these buildings have now disappeared. South of Bellona is a tiny group known as the Wreck Islands, an appropriate name for all.

After he left the Isle of Pines d'Entrecasteaux thought he had found a pass in the Caledonian mainland. Actually what he had seen was the great islet-dotted bay of St. Vincent, which digs into the west coast some fifty miles north of Noumea. He called it Havre Trompeur (False Harbour), not being able to find a channel.

After visting the archipelagos to the northward already mentioned, d'Entrecasteaux went to the Friendly

Isles. He returned to New Caledonia in April, 1793, when he anchored for three weeks at Balade, and it was during this stay that Huon de Kermadec died. The two corvettes then went northward to reconnoitre Cook's Reef and proceeded to other parts of the Pacific, passing Vanikoro in the Santa Cruz archipelago without, however, calling there.

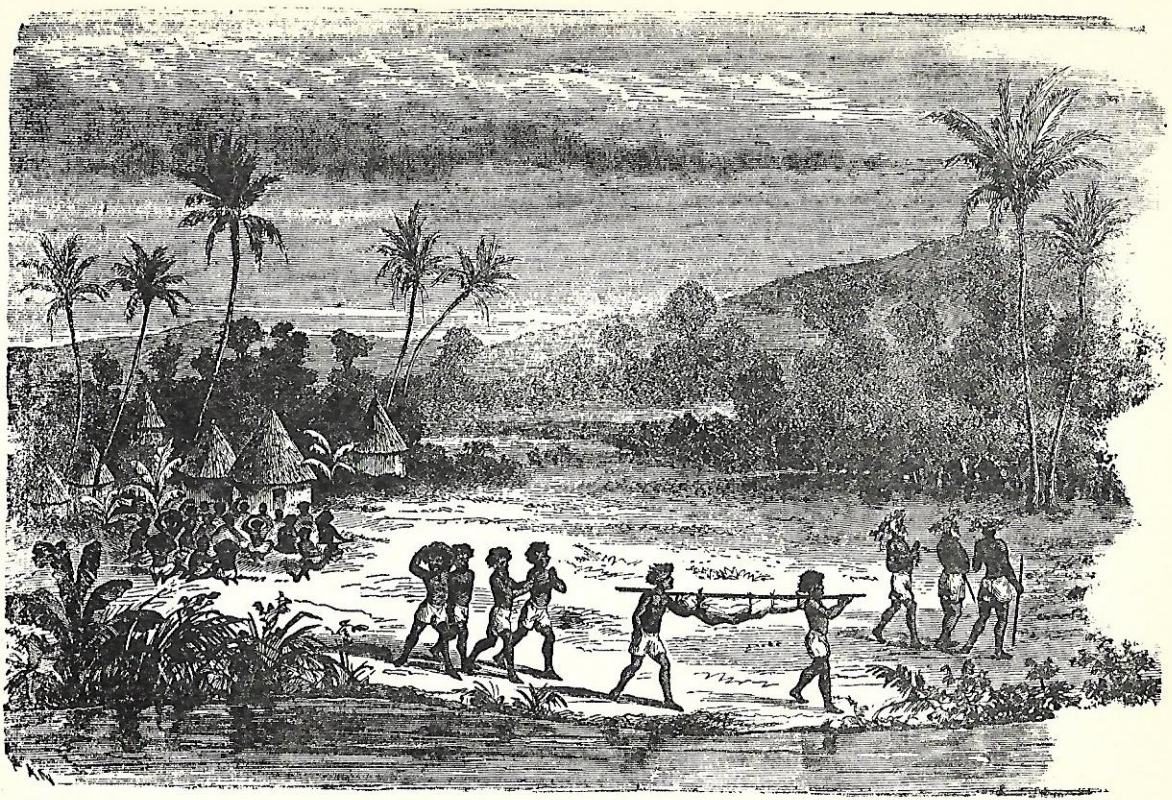
About the same time two other captains visited New Caledonia. Captain Hunter of the Dutch ship "Vigilant" in 1791 explored the southern extremity of the network of barrier reefs running out to the Isle of Pines. The other navigator was Captain Kent of H.M. frigate "Buffalo," which in 1793 was the first ship successfully to enter the Bay of St. Vincent. This he explored and described fairly adequately. Between here and the south he noted the numerous indentations of the coast and was able to forecast the existence of the Bay of the Dumbea and Noumea harbour, though he visited neither.

There remained to be determined the position and extent of the Loyalty Group, which lies fifty miles off and parallel to the east coast of New Caledonia. D'Entrecasteaux, without discovering the islands, had been nearly wrecked on the Beaumont-Beaupré reefs north of Ouvea. It was night-time and only the sudden cry of the sea-birds warned his officer of the watch in time.

These islands, which were nobody's until 1864, when the French sent an expeditionary force and declared them dependencies of New Caledonia, were discoverd by Captain Butler of the English ship "Walpole" in 1800. Dumont d'Urville explored the group in the "Astrolabe" in 1827. The three-mile long table-top isle of Walpole, already spoken of, from which New Zealand buys guano, belongs geographically to this group, rising from the same coral bed as Maré, Lifou and Ouvea.

To their Melanesian blood the Loyalty Islanders have blended a Polynesian admixture. In some coastal villages —on Lifou especially—English names are also met with, deriving from old Australasian and Massachusetts whalers, trepang fishers and sandalwood getters who used to live with native women. In the early 1850's Lifou was the haunt of a certain white who rejoiced in the name of Cannibal Charlie, a distinction he enjoyed many years before Fiji evolved a similar character known as Cannibal Jack.

Loyalty Islanders are generally handsomer and more adaptable and energetic than the natives of New Caledonia proper. They make fine sailors and since 1940 a good many have gone overseas as volunteers with the Free



Cannibal chief's funeral, with official grave-watchers, corpse-bearers, mourners, and the tribal village squatting before their beehive-like huts, howling their grief.

French Navy, while many others—in particular grand chief Naisseline's subjects of Maré—have enrolled in the Noumea garrison and are playing their part in the island's defence. Others are making themselves useful as stevedores and road-makers for the United States Forces, by whom they are well liked.

The Loyalties have a population of nearly 12,000 and in normal years many emigrate to Noumea, working on the docks and on coastal vessels. Native-owned schooners ply particularly between Maré, the most fertile island, and Noumea with cargoes of native fruit and vegetables which are sold at the wharf-side.

The chief port of Maré is Tadine, where the French administrator resides. The islanders assembled here in 1940 for a great farewell feast of song for their departing volunteers, who continued to sing all the way over the water and also while they marched from dock to Noumea barracks. They harmonise beautifully; in fact, the American troops say they have never heard anything like it. Maré's grand chief Naisseline's village is at Netché; one meets this chief on his occasional visits to Noumea, an intelligent man of fine character, educated at the Collège de la Pérouse. Such chiefs belong to ancient dynasties; they and the old men impose the laws, and what they say goes. The younger people are called before them for punishment if caught wrong-doing.

Between Maré and Lifou, the largest island of the group, are a number of unimportant islets of which one, Tiga, is inhabited by a small tribe. Wars used to be fought for its possession. Lifou's chief port or capital is Chépénéhé or Wide Bay to the old English sailors, or Baie de Santal if you are French. The population is over 6,000, or nearly twice that of Maré. Boula is one of the grand chiefs from here whom one occasionally meets in Noumea, and his grandfather, like Naisseline's, comes into this story.

Ouvea, shaped like a crescent enclosing a large lagoon, is the island par excellence to see the "human net" manner of catching fish. It mixes two languages because during the last century a large party of Polynesians from the Wallis Islands, east of Fiji, emigrated here in their long canoes, scared away by the anger of their chief whose son had lost his life in a fishing accident. They named their new island Ouvea after the largest of the Wallis group whence they had come.

After over three years in New Caledonia I find it is not difficult to distinguish these Ouveans from the Maré and Lifou natives one meets on Noumea wharf. They have

a sort of lazy, faraway look in their eyes, and retain much of the Polynesian langour and grace. They are good sailors but have lost much of their old skill as canoe builders, and can no more look forward to the old excitement of raiding the mainland coasts for food and women. Their chief village, Fayaoué, has quite a Polynesian ring about it.

The Loyalty Islands are divided into Catholic and Protestant villages, the latter predominating. Once formidable warriors and cannibals, they were converted more rapidly and easily than the mainlanders, and get more out of civilisation. But white lawlessness and interference with native women was the cause of trouble in the past. Vessels visiting these islands in the wake of the explorers, to water and careen, to trade or to catch whales, were sometimes cut off "as revenge," says an old English navigator, "for injuries inflicted by lawless crews whose superiority to the blacks is often limited to a knowledge of gunpowder."

CHAPTER III.

SANDALWOOD AND SEA-SLUG

OF all the tales of the early navigators, I like best the one which tells of the prowess of a native spear-thrower. D'Entrecasteaux, who unlike Cook had trouble with the blacks, relates that at one spot on the east coast, when a threatening band of tayos gathered round him, he decided to impress them with the terrible effect of European weapons. He had a pigeon—probably a fat, metallic-blue, self-satisfied notou—tied to a tree. Placing three of his best marksmen at a suitable distances, he ordered them to fire at it. One after the other they did so, but none of the shots took effect. At length one of the natives who had been nonchalantly watching the white men's efforts, picked himself up, seized his spear, and transfixed the unfortunate bird at his first throw.

About 1804 a number of convicts escaped from New South Wales and settled in the no-man's-land of the South Pacific, the outcast's paradise and the outcast's grave. Twenty-seven of them, we are told, arrived as far afield as Fiji, where they made themselves dreaded by the natives by their murderous use of firearms. "Their progress spread terror and death. No thought of improving and consolidating the power thus won seems to have been entertained by these whites. Had such a desire possessed them, the absolute government of the entire group lay within their reach; but their ambition never rose beyond a life of indulgence and an unrestrained gratification of the vilest passions. Some of them were men of the most desperate wickedness, being regarded as monsters even by the ferocious cannibals with whom they associated."

In due course most of them fell in native wars or in combat among themselves, and several are known to have been eaten. This was the age when shipwrecked mariners, deserters, and those whose lives had somehow been spared in coastal massacres were obliged to lead the native life, learn the native language and take part in tribal affrays. It was the age of Mariner in Tonga and the tattooed Rutherford in New Zealand.

Men of this type in the early days of last century were dotted around the island groups of New Caledonia and the New Hebrides. Unfortunately neither they, nor the whalers and bêche-de-mer fishers and sandalwood getters who succeeded them, have left posterity any charts or

accounts of their voyages and adventures and of their relations with the blacks.

We know, however, that Australian and Massachusetts whalers were calling at islands off the Caledonian coast as early as the 1830's, and that in the 1840's traders, notably the Portsmouth-born Englishman, James Paddon, had agents scattered about these seas buying from the natives and fishing on their own account with the help of native crews. Paddon's men got on better with and were better liked by the savages than the early missionaries, who resented their competition and disapproved of their influence and their ways.

Official callers were few and far between, and Sydney, rapidly becoming queen and capital of the Western Pacific, really knew little of these cannibal isles until the trading age got well under way. But a British or French man-o'-war did occasionally sail past and chart a little of the coastline, made difficult by the frightful barrier reef prolonged to great distances both southward and northward of the mainland. They left no impression on the inhabitants.

The real trading age opened about 1828, with the discovery of sandalwood. The Chinese market was then offering a high price for this commodity, and also for the (to Chinese tastes) edible sea-slug known to science as the Holothuria edulis, and to the whites as trepang or bêche-de-mer. Hitherto thousands of Chinese and Malay junks had set out every year to fish for this repulsive, slimy-looking zoophyte, going as far afield as Borneo, Sumatra, the Moluccas, Cambodge, Cochin-china and the Indian Ocean. But now, with the help of Polynesian and Melanesian crews, whites began to exploit a great virgin field further south. For long it brought a handsome return, and even up to the time America entered the present war the Japanese traders in New Caledonia considered it a profitable sideline.

Up to 1866 bêche-de-mer was New Caledonia's principal export, averaging 100,000 francs per annum. That may not sound much to modern ears, but to men like Paddon who built up the industry and who died a millionaire (in francs), it meant a lot. Even in 1890 New Caledonia exported 80,000 francs' worth of this sea-slug at the old rate of 25 francs to the pound sterling.

Of sandalwood the same may be said—here lay a great untapped field, inhabited by natives anxious to gather large quantities in exchange for the white man's axes and beads and firearms. The amount of trade between the Australian

colonies and China was to depend on the price of the precious wood, which varied from £40 to £12 per ton.

So several expeditions were fitted out, principally from Sydney. The vessels employed were generally small, and often so worn out as to be unfitted for other branches of commerce. The crews were collected in Sydney or picked up among the islands. They were almost universally paid by the lay, as in whaling voyages, that is to say, by a share either of the wood collected or of the value calculated at a low fixed price (about £12 per ton), the proportion for each seaman being one seventy-second part.

An exception to this method of payment was that adopted by Captain Paddon, greatest figure of these early days. He used to pay his seamen £2 5s. per month until the vessel arrived at the island where sandalwood was to be got, or until she left one of his numerous island stations, when he would pay them thirty shillings a month plus two shillings per ton each for all the wood collected. Men in charge of his stores, like Mr. Rodd at the Isle of Pines, used to be paid by the lay, at one-sixth.

Paddon's ships frequently visited Sydney, for he traded on a large scale. The names of some of them were "Governor," "Rover's Bride," "Master Bell," "Speck," "Bluebell," "New Forest," "Black Dog," and the "Julia Percy," of 102 tons, Parramatta-built at a cost of £1,200.

Sandalwood traders were secretive about their doings for fear of competition, and like black-birding at a later date the commerce with few exceptions was conducted "in a manner discreditable to the white men employed in it, who often showed themselves in no way behind the blacks in cruelty and treachery, and indeed, with the sole exception of cannibalism, in the practice of all the vices that are generally ascribed to savages." Rear-Admiral John Elphinstone Erskine, of H.M.S. "Havannah," in making these remarks adds that Paddon was an exception.

He says that this enterprising Englishman was known in the South Seas as one of the most active and honourable masters of his trade. He formed his first great regular establishment or factory at Anatom, most southerly of the New Hebrides, started a new base at the Isle of Pines, and eventually moved his main stores to Ile Nou, the three-mile long isle athwart Noumea's inner harbour. He surrounded himself with scores of white men and their families and no man ever went to him for a job in vain. The friendly feeling of the native towards strangers, when properly treated, was conspicuous in his case wherever he settled. At Anatom the whole island was open to Europeans

who resided there in perfect security, and it was to be the same at Ile Nou.

Paddon's first appearance in the South Seas was in a fine brig, the "Brigand," of which he was owner and in which he had been engaged in the opium trade in China. His search for sandalwood took him to the Loyalty Islands, where the wood was abundant and which for years had attracted traders from the Australian colonies.

In 1841 there was a massacre at Maré, a boat's crew from the "Martha," of Sydney, being cut off. They had gone to the north-east side of the island looking for precious woods and pulled in to a village called Seruimet, where the boat was sent ashore. As they were getting ready to return, the chief begged permission to go with them and see their vessel, an object of wonder to him. This was refused. He continued to urge his request and as the men commenced to pull, one of the oars accidentally struck his head. The beach was crowded with natives who, on seeing their chief hurt, at once supposed it had been done intentionally. They rushed forward, killed the whole party, and broke the boat in pieces.

Stimulated possibly by this success and urged, it is supposed by the misconduct of some of the English seamen towards the women, their next attempt was to capture the "Brigand," which was there in November, 1843. No fewer than seventeen of the crew were killed on this occasion and several wounded. Ben Owen Thomas, an old Lifou half-caste who lives in Noumea, tells me he once saw the skulls of these seventeen men still lying on the beach.

That the anger of the natives on this occasion was excited against particular individuals appeared from the fact that several of the crew who were on shore had been conducted on board in safety by grand chief Naisseline (grandfather of the present chief) and by another chief.

Paddon, level-headed as ever, behaved with great prudence and moderation, as in an affidavit made by him before the superintendent of Norfolk Island after the disaster, he stated that as soon as he had cleared the ship of the assailants "he endeavoured to stop the firing for the sake of the people on shore, and thus not more than six musket-shots, and no long gun, were fired after them." He added that "he did not think the trade would be permanently injured by this unhappy event; on the contrary, it would be improved."

A ship called the "Sisters" was cut off about the same time and other savage and bloody acts committed, but Paddon was right, and conditions did improve.

Over his base at Anatom Paddon used to fly the British flag. It was here he began to build his fleet of small vessels with which he carried on a lucrative trade. He used sometimes to ship direct to the China market, and his one surviving daughter—born at Ile Nou a few years before his death and to-day one of the oldest ladies living in Noumea —tells me on at least one occasion he made the voyage there himself. There were two missionaries of the London Missionary Society on Anatom when he arrived. Later Paddon was able to succour the French priests on one of the occasions when they were driven out of New Caledonia by the ferocity of the blacks.

More early history. Maré and Lifou first heard of Christianity from lay brothers of this London society. In 1840 the English missionary John Williams embarked at Samoa on the brig "Camden" a number of native teachers who were to spread the gospel through the South-west Pacific. They were put ashore at various parts of the New Hebrides, but in landing at the island of Erromango, the white missionary was himself killed and eaten. The "Camden" continued her voyage, touching at the Isle of Pines and the Loyalties before going to St. Vincent on the west coast, where she left the Samoans referred to in the first chapter.

At Maré three lay brothers named Tataio, Taniela and Fao were landed. They were cordially received by grand chief Naisseline. At the time of their arrival the neighbouring and larger island of Lifou was the scene of an insurrection, grand chief Boula and his royal family, known as the Api Co, being chased away by their subjects, the Angaetra. They took refuge at the village of Gaitcha with grand chief Zeoula, and sent an envoy named Nazohri by canoe to Maré to demand help from Naisseline.

The latter assembled his stoutest warriors and embarked them on his war canoes, taking with them the three Samoan teachers. They landed on the beach at Ahrarewed near a place called Mou, where they camped. From here a message was sent to the council of chiefs owing allegiance to Boula, through chief Luc Melem, elected head of the Angaetra rebels at the time of the royal family's flight.

Naisseline demanded that the following conditions should be immediately accepted: firstly, that Boula should be re-established on his throne; and secondly, that the Samoan Fao should remain on Lifou to teach the gospel. Otherwise it would be war.

Luc Melem accepted and made his peace with Boula. and Fao began teaching Christianity to the Lifouans. It

was he that built the first Protestant church at Ahrarewed beach. Here a monument was erected in 1942 recording the centenary of the island's evangelisation by Fao. Unfortunately, owing to war rationing and shortage of foodstuffs caused by drought, the festivities could not be kept up as long as had been hoped.

At Ouvea in the 1850's were two uncles of the young chief Ouénégué of Fayahouè. Bible influence was spreading and one of them, Ben-Boula, who had lost his eye in some scrap, had been nicknamed Samson on account of his strength; while his brother was just as big-proportioned. Both possessed enormous heads of hair reddened with lime.

It is of interest that the one-eyed chief had formerly been away on a Yankee boat and had worked for several years on the North American continent. What he saw of white cilivisation did not make him forget his little South Seas isle. Seizing a favourable opportunity, he returned to the village of his fathers, poor in money if rich in experience. With delight he resumed the carefree life of a savage, which he declared he would not abandon for all the luxuries and pleasures to be had in the growing towns of the New World.

This minister for war of a peaceful and unarmed people, when asked if he would like to visit Europe, shook his head and replied in excellent English: "No, gentlemen, I have had enough of your customs and manners and what I have seen of them makes me more than ever appreciate my own island and our native ways. In your countries the sun is capricious, first hot, then cold, the sea is grey, stormy and dull, the clouds often full of rain and snow and hail, the trees, the plants, sleep and die for many moons so that you do not know where to cast your eyes saddened by the spectacle of a Nature that is dead. Man himself never ceases to struggle against cold, hunger and poverty, up to the day when his strength is all used up and he must die. In misery he goes to the wall; whereas in our isles the sun, the sea, the sky, the vegetation, all are calm and serene, smiling and pleasant to the senses. No, gentlemen, I shall not go back to your countries."

Tribal wars on the Caledonian mainland continued for many, many years after the French officially took possession, and without as a rule any means of checking them. An example of the way the natives used to war among themselves may be quoted from Arama, isolated spot in the far north still, in 1943, without anything but sea communication with the rest of the colony, save for an occasional American or New Zealand peep.

The yam harvest was abundant that year (round about 1850), and but for one thing the harvest pilou would have been outstanding. Unfortunately the Aramas had concluded an armistice with their hereditary enemies, the Nénémas, and their was no human flesh to dress for the ovens. Only the young people had the heart to dance; the old men of Arama, with their friends from Koumac, Tiari and Balade, sat around despondently reminding each other that it was not like old times. They recalled great butcheries of the past, like that on the plateau of Daqueboun, where the tayos of Gomen, Koumac and Arama had met the warriors of Bondi. Were not a hundred and forty-two stones still there in perfect alignment to testify to the number of Bondis that had been killed and eaten!

As they were talking a sentinel signalled the approach of a great war canoe manned by thirty splendid but imprudent young Nénémas tempted by the pleasures of the dance. They advanced in single file and handed the customary gifts to the Arama chief, exchanging speeches of friendship. But treachery was in the air, the nostrils of the old Aramas were hungry for the smell of roast flesh. At a conference their fate was decided on. The Arama chief halted the strangers and told them that their presence at the pilou was odious to him and to his allies, but that he would see them escorted safely back to their canoe.

Instead, they were led straight into an ambush; thirteen of their number were killed and the rest escaped with difficulty. A meat supply assured, the pilou brightened up considerably. But Nemesis was on the way. A few days later, while the Aramas and their allies were recovering from their orgies they were fallen on by several great war canoe loads of revengeful Nénémas, who wrecked havoc among them and then left, carrying back to their isles many dead men and prisoners to avenge their own tayos so treacherously slain.

CHAPTER IV.

BOUARAT AND THE BISHOP

ABOUT the time the Samoan lay brothers found their way back to their own country from the inhospitable Caledonian west coast, Monseigneur Douarre, Bishop of Amata, newly-appointed coadjutor of the Catholic Vicar Apostolic of New Zealand, boarded the "Uranie" and left France for Tahiti. From there Admiral Dupetit-Thouars sent him on to New Caledonia by the "Bucéphale," calling en route at Wallis.

This group, discovered by the English navigator Wallis in 1767, was already (1843) occupied by a Marist mission established on Ouvea, the principal isle. These islands lie 900 miles north-east of Fiji and 600 west of Samoa. The principal chief signed a treaty of friendship with France which was converted into a protectorate in 1887. The group is mentioned here because, although the kava-drinking natives are pure Polynesian, speaking a melodious Tahitian dialect, it is to-day administered as a Caledonian dependency. Really it is the priests who rule with absolute power, for the islands are almost completely out of touch with Noumea, commercial relations being with Fiji and Samoa.

The same remarks apply to the nearby Horn group, discovered by the Dutch in 1616, and on whose principal island, Futuna, a French missionary named Chanel was killed in 1837. From being a protectorate this group was formally annexed by France in 1913, and administratively attached to Noumea though virtually governed by the priests.

When the French man-o'-war "Bucéphale" anchored at Balade she was the first war vessel the natives had seen since Bruny d'Entrecasteaux' disastrous voyage. "Almost at once," one of the Frenchmen recounts, "the sea was covered with canoes expertly handled by picturesquely tattooed savages. They surrounded the ship, but dared not come too close. They came from Balade and neighbouring streams, whose inhabitants ran up en masse to look at the whites. It was curious to notice their different colouring, some black, the majority a dark red-brown colour, and others possessed of the bronzed skin that characterises the Polynesian.

"Our least noise frightened them. It was a hard job to get them to climb aboard, and they examined us with stupefaction mixed with fear. Everything intrigued them

The rough coral coastline of the Isle of Pines, scene of early massacres and one-time headquarters of the sandalwood trade.

The first Frenchmen to reside in New Caledonia were Marist missionaries, notably Mgr. Douarre, first bishop of the future French Colony, who arrived on the "Bucephale," 21st December, 1845. It was he who influenced the French to take possession ten years later.

Correction : The date of arrival of the Missionaries was 1843 and not 1845 as stated above.

—the sound of the bell, the roll of the drums, the loud commands and the rapid and orderly movements of the crew. Little by little they grew bolder. A handsome carved canoe was the first to draw alongside. Presently a much tattooed native, whom the others treated with considerable respect, climbed to the bridge at the invitation of the officers. It was the Balade chief Paiama. He was followed by his escort bringing gifts of yams, taros, coconuts, and all sorts of native weapons, spears and tomahawks. In exchange they were given glass beads and calico with which they were delighted."

Thanks to having picked up the elements of the Polynesian language, Père Viard, one of the arrivals, was able to make himself understood to some of the coppery skinned natives when he learnt they had come from a neighbouring isle (probably Ouvea) where a large number of inhabitants were of Polynesian origin. They told him that no whites had attempted to establish themselves at Balade. French missionaries could pride themselves on being the first.

Père Viard asked what was the native name for New Caledonia. They replied "Oheo," which the missionary believed must be the name for the whole island; but here his wisdom was at fault, for in spite of the legend that resulted, "Oheo" was never the native name for New Caledonia. The natives, in fact, did not possess a generic name for the whole island, of which they had no definite idea. "Oheo" was simply the name of Paiama's country seat, whence his title of Amoheo—Lord, or Resident, of Oheo. Hippolyte, the present chief of Balade, and a direct descendant of Paiama, is still known by this title.

The missionaries landed the day after their arrival, and one of their first acts was to pay a visit to Paiama. They were escorted to his dwelling by hundreds of armed savages. It was a half hour's walk, and during this time, writes one of them, "we got separated from one another. It would have been a simple matter to knock us on the head. They stared at us wonderingly and unceasingly, and often made us stop so that they could contemplate us at their ease."

The object of the visit was to get a concession of land from the grand chief to establish a mission. Their reception was good and they obtained what they wanted—a piece of ground in a coconut grove fringing the sea at Matamate, alongside a hut belonging to the chief. It was here that the banyan tree referred to is situated.

With the help of sailors and natives, the next few weeks were spent building the mission, and on 21st January, 1844,

a French flag, presented by the "Bucéphale's" commander, Vicomte de la Ferrière, was hoisted ashore and greeted with a 21-gun salute, a sort of preliminary taking possession of the island which the French later disavowed at the request of Great Britain.

There is no doubt that subsequently Frenchmen regarded New Caledonia as in some measure making up for the loss of the South Island of New Zealand, and that when the real "prise de possession" came ten years later it was helped by the alliance with Britain during the Crimean War.

This was the great age of settlement of some of the choicest regions of the globe. Americans recall it as the age of the Texas annexation and the epic movement along the Oregon Trail; while Californians, backward looking to the "days of old, and the days of gold, and the days of '49," recall how their State was suddenly roused from being a sleepy, romantic community of Spanish-American ranchers into a hustling and populous commonwealth of Anglo-Saxons.

In Australia the great stock routes were being opened up—an epic story in itself—and immigrants were pouring in their thousands into Sydney and Melbourne and Adelaide.

New Zealand was very young. It was only in 1840 that Captain Hobson and the Maoris signed the Treaty of Waitangi in the name of Queen Victoria; and while Wakefield's New Zealand Company was busy around Wellington, Louis-Phillipe's colonisation company, the Compagnie Nanto-Bordelaise, produced its scheme of settlement. But when in May that year French colonists made their appearance in Akaroa Bay in the South Island, they were too late; those who decided to stay had, in the words of a French historian, to make up their minds that one day they or their descendants would be British subjects. The occupation of New Caledonia was therefore particularly pleasing to the French.

At first the bishop was amused by native curiosity: "They took us for gods, following us about grinding their teeth, lifting up the bottom of our trousers to admire the whiteness of our flesh, then clapping their hands as if to say, 'That would make a fine morsel.'" His tune changed as he got to know the mbetter—"as regards intellect they are children, in their passions brutes, and they are monsters of ferocity."

The fathers planted cabbages and acquired Caledonian money made of shells rubbed and polished with great labour into the shape of pearls, enough to procure them

food for six months. The chief also sent them a supply of yams, but what heartened them most in their solitude was the arrival of the French corvette "Rhin" in September. She left them all the stores she could spare and continued her way to Sydney.

Next caller was the Sydney schooner "Marion Watson," hired by a party of priests under Bishop Epalle to take them to the Solomons. Three months later she came back minus the bishop, who had been killed and eaten on the island of Ysabel, and with one or two of the priests wounded, among them Père Montrouzier, who recovered from a spear thrust in his side to play a long and active role in New Caledonian settlement.

Mgr. Douarre now left for Sydney by this English vessel and presently returned on the "Ariel" with a plentiful supply of stores. These came in useful next June when the French corvette "Seine" was wrecked on the reefs in sight of the mission, which succoured the crew of 230. There was general relief when an English sail arrived although "following their usual custom," says a Jesuit writer, "the English demanded an exorbitant price to convey the crew to Sydney. The bishop, manifesting his indignation, offered them one-half and the deal was done."

The missionaries were beginning to find out what the natives meant when they ground their teeth. Plague decimated the Baladians, followed by failure of the yam harvest. The savages blamed these disasters on the fathers whom they accused of sorcery. The wreck of the "Seine" also arousd their appetite for loot. They carried out a series of attacks, destroying first the plantations, then burning down and looting the mission, and cutting off the head of a lay brother named Blaise Marmoiton, whose corpse was mutilated.

The survivors fled by night and were taken on board the "Arche d'Alliance." They sought refuge eleven miles down the coast at Pouebo, where another mission was being established, but this was to have an equally fateful history, for the cupidity and blood-lust of the Pouebos was excited by the Balade pillage. Again there was a siege and all seemed up when a sail appeared on the horizon. It was the "Brillante" commanded by Viscount du Bouzet. This corvette removed them to Sydney, but not before the French sailors took vengeance upon the tribes of both places. Several villages and coconut groves were destroyed as a lesson, and in the several encounters which took place five whites were wounded and many natives killed, the rest seeking refuge in the mountainous hinterland.

The fathers next established themselves at Anatom, Paddon's New Hebridean home which lies in about the same latitude as Balade. Here the Englishmen helped them in every way possible; but in the end the island was found to be feverish, and as more missionaries arrived in 1848, it became overcrowded. Mgr. Douarre therefore decided on a return to the Caledonian coast, with headquarters at the Isle of Pines.

During their absence from Balade the crew of an American schooner named "The Cutter" were killed and eaten. The Balade chief was a thorough old scoundrel who had saved from the mission loot a particularly handsome soutane in which he was fond of parading up and down before what remained of the old station. In his hands he carried a breviary which he pretended to consult in the manner of the white witch doctors. The Yankees mistook him for a Holy Joe and thought it might be amusing to exchange a bit of gossip with him, but the moment they set foot on shore they were knocked on the head and cut up for the tribal ovens.

For a while the bishop had the intention of establishing his main mission at St. Vincent on the little-known west coast, but though the "Arche d'Alliance" explored many islets in the great bay, wood and water were lacking. So the east coast was re-explored. First stop was at Yaté in the south, where the river draining off the Plaine des Lacs plateau runs through a deep romantic gorge several miles long, and then winds out to sea through a narrow, difficult passage through a fringing coral reef.

Next spot was Canala, scenic fjord-like bay between high mountains. Here the bishop bartered with the natives for a large property for a future church and mission. But he and his companions were horrified to hear of the cannibal exploits of local chief Aliki-Kai and his followers and to see the hideous trophies adorning the tribal villages. For the moment there was no settling there.

Further up the coast, in the most strikingly scenic bay of all, three fathers were disembarked at Hienghene (pronounced "Yangen"), whose grand chief Bouarat seemed a little more tractable than previously. The ship then continued to Balade, where the tayos came down to the beach fully armed, weeping crocodile tears because since the "Cutter" incident shipping had given them a wide berth. They promised to be good boys if only the missionaries would stay, saying they would leave them the seashore and retire peacefully to the hills.

The bishop doubted the genuineness of their repentance

and did not see fit to agree to their proposal. But he took on board a number of prospective Balade and Pouebo converts who expressed their willingness to leave, intending to land them at Yaté. This place, however, owing to an outburst of tribal warfare, proved inhospitable, so they were taken down to the Isle of Pines, whence some of them set out with Père Rougeyron for Futuna and Wallis, while the rest were sent round to start the La Conception mission village near Noumea.

During this return trip the bishop called a second time at Hienghene and found his three missionaries in a state of siege. A Balade convert who understood the local dialect also informed him that a plot was afoot to kill and eat him, the bishop, at the forthcoming yam harvest pilou. The danger was real, but help arrived from an unexpected quarter.

Twenty Fijians under a Manilla mulatto had been landed by an adventurous Yankee trader up in the north where they had been set fishing for bêche-de-mer on the largish island of Balabio. Here the Balade natives, profiting from a rainy day when they would find it difficult to use their muskets, had attacked them. But the Fijians were experienced in the ways of cannibal warfare; in good order they retired to their whaleboats and sailed south to Hienghene, providing the bishop with badly-needed reinforcements.

Next the "Marion Watson" turned up, mission property was carried aboard under various pretexts and the brethren embarked for the Isle of Pines, which for a time became the only mission left in New Caledonian waters. Another hundred east coast converts were landed there later on, awaiting the establishment of the St. Louis and La Conception villages on the mainland.

The Hienghene party had extraordinary tales to tell of grand chief Bouarat, redoubtable enemy of the French. One of his tayos nearly succeeding in braining the bishop a few days before his departure. Bouarat used sometimes to come along and eat with the fathers, clad in church finery stolen at Balade. He would mock at his hosts, hinting that it would soon be his pleasure to eat them. Outside his partisans would sit around gnawing human bones with a relish that seemed to say, "Your turn will come next, you unfortunate whites."

Bouarat was an energetic and far from unintelligent savage. He was head of the most powerful collection of tribes in all Caledonia. The bay he inhabited is fantastic in appearance with its great limestone rocks, among them

the extraordinary pinnacled islet rising sheer out of the water which Bishop Selwyn of New Zealand in 1848 christened the "Gates of Yangen," but which the French of a later day know as the "Towers of Notre Dame."

To-day there are coffee plantations up the river, but in Bouarat's time the banks were covered with native gardens rising in terraces up the hillsides. Luxuriant vegetation, bananas and coconut groves, tree ferns, and Tahiti-like foliage including lianas or vines ran up the tributary valleys. The traveller was struck by the fact that huts were scattered up both sides of the stream, whereas elsewhere on the island tribes were usually grouped together in compact villages.

So Bouarat was powerful and rapidly becoming known for his hostility to the French. In this, the French allege, he was encouraged by English and American sailors who were living a native life outside of civilised control. These men did not want to be dominated by any outside power, least of all by the French.

Bouarat made his first acquaintance with firearms through Captain Richards of the "Marion Watson" between 1843 and 1846. He used to try out these weapons on women and young natives without families to support them. He would plant his victims at a suitable distance and take pot shots at them. It was better fun than getting his court executioner to knock his daily meat ration on the head. It is alleged that he made such rapid progress as a marksman that his English mentors began to wonder whether they had not over-encouraged him. When they made an attempt to deprive him of supplies of powder and shot, instead of politely listening to them, he threatened them so that they had to give him more.

Like certain Maori chieftains before him, Bouarat visited Sydney, where the English tried to make a gentleman of him and where the newspapers described him as the "King of New Caledonia." He was given a horse, and taught to play the accordeon and to eat with a fork. He became greatly attached to the English, or "Sydney men" as he used to call them. For all that he remained a full-blooded cannibal, forbidding his people to become Christian.

The French say that it was the captains of English vessels who were responsible for his refusal to let the priests stay. They touched the chord of self-interest by telling him that once these were established at Hienghene the English ships would call no more, and that his supply of arms, ammunition and axes would automatically dry up. The prejudices of the blacks were also shocked by the

fathers, who were either derided for going about dressed like women, or feared as witch doctors. A favourite saying of Bouarat was that he did not want French "takatas" (witch doctors) among his tribes, and he averred that the soutanes of lay brothers hid the instincts of rapacious traders, while native spies came to him under the guise of neophytes.

The tussle between this redoubtable chief and the French finally ended, as such tussles usually end, with his submission. Père Montrouzier has written that in Catholic eyes Hienghene had a further importance. It was considered a place that should be proselytised not only on its own account, because of its large population and the influences of its chief, but as a centre which called for occupation to prevent the Protestants from establishing themselves there. "Their Bishop Selwyn had already been there in H.M.S. 'Havannah.' So we had above all to find out what was happening and to counter the intrigues of the English sandalwood-getters and traders, the most uncompromising and formidable enemies of our mission, who opposed us just as much because we were French as because we were Catholic."

It is obvious how the scene was set for bloodshed. For several years Bouarat forbade his subjects from becoming converts and said he would allow no Catholics to settle among his people. When in 1857 a few converts from other tribes landed on Hienghene beach, they were killed and eaten. But a French man-o'-war, the "Styx," came along in October bringing Governor du Bouzet. He enticed Bouarat on board and took him prisoner in his own harbour, under the shadow of the Towers of Notre Dame. He then summarily tried and sentenced him to five years' exile in Tahiti, for armed opposition to Christianity and the French. He left for Papeete the following February on the "Indefatigable" and was interned at Taravao. In the fight between Bouarat and the bishop, it was the bishop that had won.

Here I must anticipate somewhat and say that after his return in 1863, on a ship called the "Latouche-Treville," Bouarat lived peacefully among his people, becoming a firm ally of France and apparently ceasing contact with hostile tribes. Sometimes he even lent his warriors to the French to punish their enemies. This of course does not mean that he ever gave up his savage and cannibal ways, or that things did not go on at isolated Hienghene to which the French were not glad to close their eyes.

His people were devoted to him, for he was a real chief

in manner as in stature and considered large and generous in his ways. His arrest and exile in Tahiti much angered them, and they gave the French a lot of trouble, the latter holding that the few English and American sailors living in the region were making common cause with them and supplying them with arms.

The result was that in 1859 Noumea fitted out a military expedition of 175 men—a large force for the time and one only made possible by the arrival of reinforcements from France. These reinforcements included many "disciplinaires," or soldiers undergoing long terms of military punishment for insubordination. These were about the best troops for Caledonian conditions and they rather looked down on the other white soldiers. They used to wear dark blue Zouave trousers and a short red vest or tunic and were known as "camisards."

In the ensuing fighting native losses were heavy. The bitterness on both sides is shown by the fighting on 2nd September, 1859, when the French lost in killed the marine infantry Captain Tricot and two soldiers and had twenty-five wounded—a high percentage for this class of warfare.

Six days later two Britishers and an American—their names were Fred Williams, William Smith and Samuel Baily—were shot by a firing squad on Hienghene beach. Nothing definite was proved against them, and the matter was hushed up for fear of international complications. They were charged with assisting native rebels and supplying them with ammunition. It seems to have been over this affair that Paddon temporarily left the colony.

At Paita, near Noumea on the west coast, where another punitive expedition was going on, two English sailors and a native chief were arrested on suspicion and brought to the capital, but were released for lack of evidence. Altogether in 1859 fifty persons of foreign origin were expelled the colony.

A worse fate befell an English trader named Capron in the north, for he was killed and eaten by the Tahou tribe on the plateau of the reefs of Cape Colnett.

As for Bouarat, in due course he died. His body was preserved by his son Philip Bouarat. This son used to dress European fashion and could speak French, but like his father and most natives of the time, preferred to speak English. At his door he kept the skulls of six enemies whom he had eaten. His principal hut was filled with European furniture and objects and he would invite visitors in for a glass of trade gin. Another of his huts served as the village calaboose. In it he kept chains for his prisoners, an innovation which much increased his prestige and authority.

Chapter V.

THE ISLE OF PINES

THAT tiny New Caledonian dependency, the Isle of Pines, was coming into the picture in the 1840's as a base for traders and missionaries who from it pursued their exploration and expansionist activities on the mainland. Situated sixty-three miles from the Noumea peninsula and about thirty-five from Cap N'Dua, whose lonely lighthouse to-day marks the southernmost turning of the Grande Terre, the isle is reached through a network of reefs.

On 1st December, 1847, Canal Woodin, the delightful passage separating Ile Ouen (Cook's "Prince of Wales Foreland") from the mainland, was discovered by the English trader whose name it bears. This was to prove a boon to coastal shipping, no longer forced to make the long beat round the Isle of Pines. But prior to the founding of Port-de-France (Noumea) this way was little used and the Isle of Pines had a sort of trading and strategic importance, which it lost with the development of Noumea, but which explains French anxiety to take formal possession of it in 1853.

A more important seaway, the Havannah Passage leading from Goro to the Pass de la Sarcelle and towards the New Hebrides, now used by ocean shipping, was charted by the British man-o'-war that did so much good hydrographical work in these seas round about 1848.

Sandalwood was accidentally discovered at the Isle of Pines (Kunié) in 1840, by a seaman of the "Camden" who had sufficient prudence or will-power to conceal the fact until he got to Sydney. There he showed specimens to merchants, who sent two vessels along under a Captain White. When landed in China, the voyage showed a profit. The result was that vessels flocked there from all directions manned by reckless and undisciplined men, some of whom overflowed to the Loyalties and the Caledonian mainland. Quarrels broke out, in some cases stimulated by the masters of vessels.

In October, 1842, the brig "Star" of Tahiti was seized by about thirty natives. Their chief Matuku had been insulted by the whites, and when his tayos went on board with a load of sandalwood, they asked for permission to sharpen their axes. At a favourable moment a native hit Captain Ebrill between the eyes. Seventeen of the crew were massacred, as well as others on the following morning. Some of the bodies were cooked and eaten.

Only a few months later the "Catherine," of Sydney, was attacked in the same manner, several whites being killed and wounded. Notwithstanding the bad reputation these and other massacres gave the island, the agents of the two merchants, Towns and Paddon, succeeded a year or two later in establishing themselves there in safety, securing by the exercise of common fairness and humanity the friendship of chiefs and people. These continued to supply them with sandalwood, receiving in return large quantities of blankets and cotton cloth, the "manou" of the natives, ever since used as a covering for their loins.

Some of the chiefs were said to possess chests full of these articles, all of which would be burned at their deaths. Paddon's agent Rodd told the people on board H.M.S. "Havannah" that he believed young Matuku, the old chief's successor who was generally known to the whites as Jimmy, was worth several thousand fathoms of cloth.

Rodd's first acquaintance with the island began in 1840, for he had been a cabin boy on board the "Camden." He was able to give Erskine an account of the many affrays that had occurred between the crews of different vessels and the natives. In one of these he had himself lost an eye and a hand and had narrowly escaped with his life. It was he who now supplied the British naval officers with a review of conditions in the trade, for Town's agent, Captain Lewis, was absent in one of his vessels. The last we hear of Rodd is of his massacre with his crew of the "Curlew" at Hinchinbrook Island, Sandwich (New Hebrides) in 1867 —there seems little doubt it was the same person. By this time an agent named Underwood was active in the sandalwood trade in the Isle of Pines and the Loyalties. He has native descendants still living in the group.

Prior to their conversion the Kunians were redoubtable warriors. In their large canoes they would make incursions to the Loyalties and to the mainland coasts, plundering villages and stealing men, women and children whom they would eat. Their principal enemies were the Touaourouans of southern New Caledonia and skull finds prove the battles and ambushing that used to go on. Touaourouans of to-day have pretended to me that they are able to distinguish their ancestors' skulls from those of the Kunians by their formation and thickness.

A Catholic priest arrived at the Isle of Pines in 1846, brought by an Irish captain with a recommendation from chief Garé of neighbouring Ile Ouen to chief Ouationé. Ouatione entrusted to him the education of his small son Samuel, and presently Vandegou, the principal chief, and

other notables were converted. Vandegou was chief of Gadgi, and his daughter Hortense was brought up by a Catholic nun. Later a diplomatic marriage was arranged, Père Goujou uniting Ouitoné's son Samuel to this lady whom the French, after Vandegou's death, styled "Queen of Kunié."

Needless to say, religion only slowly modified the savage nature of the inhabitants. For long years instances of cannibalism occurred. Towards 1859 a white trader from New Caledonia visited the island in a large native canoe. While at sea his attention was attracted, by his nose, to large bundles wrapped in coconut matting lying in the bottom of the boat. The stench got worse as time went on and they were held up by contrary winds. Chief and warriors were awaiting them on arrival at Kunié, where the bundles were opened up. They contained the bodies of three tayos, intended as a present for the chief, but in such an advanced state of decomposition that even the Kunians found them too "high" and amid great lamentations they had to be thrown to the sharks.

In 1863 there still existed in Kunié a legend of Cook's passage, and also it is presumed of that of La Pérouse. Jules Garnier, the first mining engineer to report on the mineral wealth of New Caledonia, was told by an old Gadgi native: "The oldest grandfathers among us, some of them not long dead, one day saw an enormous ship which stopped for some time near Amêre islet (Cook's "Botany Island"), then set sail and disappeared, leaving us full of astonishment and fear. Nevertheless we went to look at the place and found evidence that strange men had been there, trees cut down and firs that still smoked.

"The memory of this wonderful visitation was beginning to fade when two other of your great white vessels appeared. Anchoring before Gadgi, they lowered their sails. The natives were seized with such terror that they fled to the plateau. But little by little their confidence returned, and a few ventured to the sea-shore to parley with the strangers. The white man's tools and weapons excited their envy, and snatching them up, they tried to run away. It would have been better had they desisted, for the white men followed and killed three of them with their fire and wounded several others. There was a state of panic until the ships sailed away, thunder coming from their sides."

Garnier considers that after visiting the Isle of Pines, La Pérouse went along the mainland west coast. If there is no satisfactory legend of his passage there it is because

the French had hardly any contact with west coast blacks before the founding of Noumea, and his ships may have become confused in their minds with English vessels like the "Buffalo" which sailed along the coast a few years afterwards. The same writer saw in the hands of Jack Kuindo, chief of Paita, a very ancient and much worn sword, with a fleur-de-lys designed hilt, belonging to the days when La Pérouse was sailing the Pacific. Possibly it had been given to Kuindo's cannibal ancestor by the French navigator.

The population of the Isle of Pines had dwindled to six or seven hundred when Garnier was there, for which he blames maladies brought by the whites. He notes the existence there of New Caledonia's handsome crested, and like the kiwi, flightless bird, the cagou, and gives one of the best early descriptions of it. Hortense was then reigning as "queen," the only case to his knowledge where the natives allowed themselves to be ruled by a woman, "a derogation so contrary to their ancient customs that only the priests could have been responsible for it." The palace of the princess was a long low hut surrounded by a fence in a bad state of repair, and by a few coconut trees.

The inhabitants had given up cannibalism and were gradually learning French, but they would not have it that it was wrong to eat your enemies, maintaining that human flesh was just as good as pork or veal. "It's all right for you whites," one of them said, "you've got plenty of meat; when you make war you can afford to let the dead rot on the ground."

He added that the people of the Isle of Pines and Ile Ouen never ate the foremost persons of their tribe, even when they were killed for becoming too old. At Canala, on the mainland, they had not the same fine scruples. Their predecessors, however, used to eat anybody who committed grave crimes or broke tabous. Defective children or those who belonged to over-large families, or families whose breadwinners were too ill to go out fishing, were eaten. It was the father or the mother's job, once the child's fate had been decided on—and this was as soon after birth as possible—to carry him to the sea's edge, where he would be killed, washed and then cooked with taros and yams in the usual oven. "It was a good thing for the mother," the savage added.

Kunié, like all the islands surrounding the Caledonian mainland, is of coral formation. Its present-day humans are depressing, having with their native arts and crafts and customs lost all initiative and almost the will to live.

In this they are so different from the generally active and intelligent Loyalty Islanders.

But their island is a delightful place with a fine climate, rising to a plateau 800 feet high at Pic N'Ga and bathed by the sun and temperate trade winds. Around are peculiar coral islets, many like mushrooms, one aptly called the Flower Basket, and another the Toothbrush, the latter long and barren for three-quarters of its length, then for the last quarter sprouting a fine toothbrush-like crop of Caledonian pines—a most suitable name.

But Kunié's most remarkable physical feature is a series of gigantic limestone caves, complete with stalactites and stalagmites, one of them two miles in length. Portions of these caves were once used as burial grounds. The isle is a great place for turtle, and the islanders have one quality they have not lost—they are excellent fishermen. As elsewhere, the sandalwood which originally brought the white man has practically disappeared.

The main Catholic mission is at Vao, in the south, in the middle of the closest settled villages. Here solid buildings, a church, schools, a convent, and so on, were constructed. There is a gendarmerie, but in almost every detail of their lives the islanders are ruled by the priests, who segregate the sexes up to the time of marriage.

The penitentiary administration, during the deportee and rélégué period (up to 1898) added other buildings and a water tower, some of which remain, and kept there a number of functionaries and a small garrison.

In October, 1872, the "Danae" arrived before the island bringing the first convoy of deportees of the Paris Commune under military escort. They were received by grand chief Samuel—Hortense's husband—and his warriors bearing arms, suspicious that at long last the French were coming to take possession of the isle in earnest. The Communards remained in a village of their own building until 1880, when they were amnestied and mostly returned to France. A monument records their eight years of exile.

Not long afterwards convoys of Arabs sent out after the great insurrection in Algeria in 1871 were landed, and so there arose both French and Arab villages as well as the native settlements.

Among the Arab political prisoners were some of illustrious origin. For instance Bou Mezrag, or "Man with the Spear," was here, a real Arab gentleman who claimed to be the last of the Mokrani. Up to the time of the revolt his family had been great and powerful in the Hachim country in the Plain of Hodna, where they numbered 15,000

warriors. His eldest brother, Sir M'Hamed ben Mokrani, had given the signal for the revolt and raised the green standard of the Prophet. This Mokrani had been killed near Algiers while charging the French mounted on a dashing white mare to the tail of which he had tied the Cravat of the Legion of Honour, awarded him some years previously. A curious fact is that this family traced their ancestry back to a French noble, a Montmorency, taken prisoner by the Arabs in 1664 at the seige of Dijelly on the Mediterranean coast.

After the great and terrible kanak insurrection of 1878, the most serious event in New Caledonian history, the Isle of Pines received a third great wave of internees. These were some 700 mainland natives of the revolted tribes of Bouloupari, Ourail, Bourail and Poya, who had been hunted and starved into submission after massacring and mutilating over 200 white colonists. They were interned at Ouatchina, between the central plateau and the Bay of Oupi.

Lastly the island's population was temporarily increased by the sending there of white rélégués, habitual petty criminals condemned to transportation by the French assize courts. In the prisons of the Patrie they had been occupied making rope slippers. The real criminal convicts of New Caledonia heartily despised them, and so did even the rélégué women, who much preferred the real thing in the male convict line. Noumea nicknamed them "colliers blancs," after the white-collared bush pigeons which were plentiful on the Isle of Pines. They were also called "Pièces de Chili," or Chilian money, because they were not the authentic convict coin. The name has a history. About this time some enterprising trader had introduced Chilian coin from Tahiti where it had been prohibited, and unloaded it on a gullible Caledonian public, who only discovered their mistake when the local government refused to admit it as legal tender.

To-day, like cannibalism and the sandalwood trade, these different waves of internees are nothing but a memory. Save for occasional visits of a boatload of holiday makers or fishermen from Noumea, the island is neglected, though it would make a tourist resort and a fisherman's paradise. The most recent excitement was the washing up of a German mine in 1942; while the natives are said to have one day noticed Japanese in the vicinity fishing from the deck of a submarine.

Chapter VI.

THE FRENCH TAKE POSSESSION

IT was while the Bishop of Amata was at the Isle of Pines in 1850 that the French naval corvette "L'Alcmène," later to be lost in New Zealand waters, called and took on board one of the ex-Balade priests as interpreter. Then she left for the mainland, charting certain east coast reefs as far as the north cape, which was doubled. Here there arrived a tragedy which was to have some bearing on subsequent events.

Before returning south the commander felt it necessary to sound and reconnoitre passages round the northern islets. The ship anchored at Oundi and presents were made to the Daiema and Nenema blacks, exciting their cupidity and also their anger, as they understood similar presents were to be made to the Koumac tribe with whom they were at war. The chiefs, including Oulendio and his uncle Dindi, held a conference and a massacre was arranged.

To complete soundings a whaleboat manned by an ensign, de Varenne, a midshipman, de Saint-Phalle, and fifteen sailors was sent out. Two days passed and they did not return. The third day an armed party came on their wrecked boat at the island of Yenguibane, 1,500 yards from the extreme north-west point of New Caledonia. Landing on the islet, black with natives, they were able to rescue three wounded seamen.

These related how, three nights before, they had reached Yenguibane, then quite deserted, and spent the night there. Next morning, while preparing their coffee, a horde of savages rushed them from the shelter of the surrounding coconut groves. The officers and their twelve companions were killed, but the three survivors succeeded in swimming out to a small reef some hundred yards off shore.

They were the target for native slings and arrows, and presently were menaced by a new danger. For the sea rose round them, covering the reef, and their choice was between drowning and giving themselves up to the men who had murdered their comrades. They chose the second alternative, were bound and thrown into a temporary shelter from which they witnessed the carving up and sharing out of the bodies of their mates between the men of Yenguibane (who took the choicest morsels of the bodies of the officers), and those of Yandé, Belep, Bouhehouniatte, Tanhalo, Neba and Poum, all of whom had joined in the

carnage. The usual pilou followed, the survivors being reserved for a future occasion. Five years later a Belep witch doctor told Père Lambert that Dindi had given him the muscle of the leg of the foreign chief (de Varenne) as well as a strip of calico.

The massacre demonstrates the tactical ability and patience of the kanak. All day long they had shadowed the sounding party without themselves being seen. Then, night fallen, they had swum silently across from the mainland and waited for dawn, the propitious moment for attack.

The pass where the massacre took place is named the Canal de Varenne, after the ensign eaten by the Yenguibanes. Reprisals taken by an armed party from the "Alcmène" included the destruction of crops and villages, and all natives who could not escape by swimming or hiding in the bush were shot out of hand.

Reaction to the event in France was one factor leading to the decision to take possession of New Caledonia. The "Alcmène's" commander was Count Brunet Jean Marie d'Harcourt, who gives his name to the Baie d'Harcourt into which the colony's longest river, the Diahot, empties itself at the northern end of the island. This river is the sole one that runs with the axis of the country; it traverses a barren mosquito-ridden area, but a land of gold and other minerals, and even to-day its upper reaches are not well known.

On his return to Paris d'Harcourt related the story of the massacre to the Minister for the Navy, who agreed it was high time order was imposed on these recalcitrant cannibals. France, too, was beginning to feel she ought to have a naval base in the South-west Pacific, and was suspicious of England's designs on the island. Third, and perhaps most important consideration, she was looking for some place, as far from the mother country as possible and healthier than Guiana, suitable for a penitentiary establishment. The Marquesas had at first been thought of but found unsuitable.

So on 1st May, 1853, sealed orders reached Rear-Admiral Febvrier Despointes, then on the coast of Peru, to proceed to Tahiti and thence to New Caledonia. He was to make sure that the English had not hoisted their flag before him, and then waste no time in taking possession in the name of Emperor Napoleon III.

The tiny steam corvette "Phoque" with the admiral aboard made its landfall at Balade, most historic spot in New Caledonia, howbeit to-day deserted. Here Père

Rougeyron, priest in charge, was able to tell him that, although there were vague rumours of English and American sandalwood traders settled at St. Vincent on the west coast, no attempt had seemingly been made to hoist the British flag. The passing of a foreign ship up the east coast had been noted a fortnight before, but this was probably a Yankee vessel making for the Solomons to fish for bêche-de-mer, in which trade men of that nation were beginning to display considerable activity. It was believed, however, that Sydney was thinking of starting a marine coal depot on the Isle of Pines, so the quicker the French flag could be hoisted the better.

So, with due ceremony, including a 21-round salute by the ship's guns, and in the presence of officers and crew of the "Phoque" and of the Catholic priests—the natives crowding round the outside of the palisade not quite sure what was going on—the flag was hoisted. The document recording this "prise de possession," on the day now annually celebrated as New Caledonia's national holiday, runs as follows:—

"Today, Saturday, 24th September, 1853, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, I the undersigned Auguste Febvrier Despointes, Rear-Admiral commander-in-chief of the French Forces in the Pacific, acting on the orders of my government, declare having taken possession of New Caledonia and its dependencies in the name of His Majesty Napoleon III, Emperor of the French. In consequence the French flag is hoisted on the aforesaid island from to-day, 24th September, 1853, as well as over its dependencies."

Here follow the signatures of the white men present. At the admiral's order a blockhouse was established at Balade and a small garrison installed there.

Five days later a similar ceremony was staged at the Isle of Pines. The matter seemed urgent because Père Montrouzier had just received a letter brought him by an Australian sandalwood trader, from a friend in Sydney named William MacLeahy, with whom he was in the habit of exchanging plant and insect specimens. The letter said that a case of objects was being sent him aboard an English man-o'-war which was shortly leaving for New Caledonia. This letter was communicated to the admiral who exclaimed: "Qu'on chauffe!" ("Stoke her up, lads!"). The "Phoque" left Balade the following day.

At Hienghene the news of the English man-o'-war was confirmed by the crews of two Australian schooners who said they had heard she was being sent to chart the coast. This purpose of charting was confirmed during the

exchange of courtesies which soon took place at the Isle of Pines between the "Phoque" and H.M.S. "Herald" of the Sydney station. But the French were taking no chances and did not reveal their true intention, pretending they were merely paying calls to see that the Catholic missions were safe before proceeding to New Zealand.

The priests suggested to the admiral that the "Herald" was negotiating the purchase of the Isle of Pines from Vandegou, and that this done she was to return to Sydney to fetch the rest of the Australian squadron and hoist the British flag on the mainland at St. Vincent. Fearing this move the priests had prevailed on the"roi canaque" Vandegou to hide in the interior until the French came. For this reason he had been unable to treat with the English.

Père Montrouzier reveals that Vandegou—Jimmy to the English—wanted to barter away his island neither to the French nor the British. But although not a Christian nor at that time prepared to become one, he had a great respect for one of the French fathers. He was promised that he would always remain grand chief and that he would get a pension from the French government. This was to amount to 125 francs a month from the day the treaty was signed.

Actually Vandegou and his daughter Hortense had to wait a considerable time for this pension. When they did begin to get it they did not receive payment in full, until at length in 1879 Governor Olry recognised the debt. His subjects were less fortunate than their chief. In the years to come much of the cultivable land was to be taken from them for deportation and transportation settlements, but for this they were never compensated. When a protest was forwarded to Paris, the Minister replied that he had no cognisance of any promises made to the natives by Admiral Febvrier Despointes.

Thus Vandegou was induced to add his mark to the document handing over his little island to France. Smuggled ashore, the French flag was hoisted over the mission. The "Herald" did not realise what had happened, and when two days later she returned from charting the reef-strewn waters the chief was asked on board, to treat, say the French, for the island's purchase. Vandegou pointed out that he was already signed up with the "Oui-Ouis," and pretended he had flown the French flag for a long time. The commander knew this to be a lie, so he told his men to heave the old scoundrel into the sea, whence he gladly if undignifiedly swam ashore.

The French admiral immediately left for Balade, still

keeping up the pretence that he was bound for New Zealand, and the "Herald" innocently handed him bags of mail for transportation thither. But once out of sight the "Phoque" dropped these in the sea. "Poor letters, victims of politics, they would never reach their destination!" sententiously exclaims Father de Salinis, S.J., in his book, "Marins et Missionaires."

At Balade the "Phoque" found the Yankee three-master "John H. Millay" with a white crew and a score of Fiji natives engaged for bêche-de-mer fishing. Her captain struck the French as seeming to think American ways superior to those of any foreigners. He was surprised to come across a real live French admiral in these lonely waters and on such a tiny man-o'-war. He agreed to go to Sydney for a cargo of stores for the French, these being badly needed because the corvette "Constantine," awaited from the China Seas, had not yet put in an appearance. The Fijians were left behind at Balade, to their great anxiety, for they were afraid of being eaten by the Caledonians.

One of the local natives was nicknamed "Le Blondin" ("Blondy") because of the light colour of his hair; but one day he got too familiar and hit a sailor playfully over the head with an axe, for which deed he was shot. His skull was afterwards sent for exhibition to a Caledonian museum opened in the Palais of the Avenue des Champs-Elysées in Paris.

Relations with the Balade tribes were far from happy and attacks were feared on the sailors engaged in cutting niaouli for the blockhouse. Also at one time nearly all the crew were poisoned with fish eaten during the danger period when the coral is in flower. Then a plague broke out among the kanaks and was blamed on a stranger, a native woman from one of the northern isles. The chief, exercising age-old prerogative, sentenced her to death. One day she was pursued by the executioner, who hacked off a hand which she raised to protect her head. Nevertheless she managed to run into the Fijians' camp and there, covering her bloody stump with fresh leaves, she sat on the beach without a murmur, though obviously in great pain.

Presently, in full view of the crew of the "Phoque's" whaleboat, which had refused to take her off to the ship, the kanaks rushed down and carried her off. Strangling her, they bore her body back to the village. The French now threatened the chief with dire punishment unless he handed over the assassin and his two accomplices. These

were sent on board and put in chains, curious natives coming along every day to make sure the French had not eaten them. Later the accomplices were liberated, but it was decided to exile the strangler to Tahiti.

The natives planned to massacre the French, but young converts got wind of the plot and warned the whites, who decided on a punitive expedition. At one village they captured a chief named Ongou, and at the next the son and heir of Tiangoun, the ringleader. They were getting ready to leave this place when the surgeon mounted into a sort of loft which he found littered with rushes and started poking about with his sword. There was a movement in the straw and the head of grand chief Tiangoun appeared. He and the other captives were taken on board and thrown in irons.

There was some talk of hanging this chief, but eventually his life was spared and he was earmarked for a Tahitian exile. His own conviction was that the French were reserving him for the pot, so one night he broke his padlock with his strong teeth, and finding the guard asleep escaped from the hold, dropped over the side of the ship and swam ashore. The Fijians saw him pass like a shadow into the bush. The unhappy guard was put in irons in his place.

Later Tiangoun submitted to the French, becoming their ally in hostilities against other tribes. But he was always nervous of visiting them, and they had the greatest difficulty in enticing him on board under promise of safe conduct, where he was promised his liberty so long as he behaved himself.

The "John H. Millay" was slow in returning from Australia, so the French were now on half rations. But the "Marion Watson" arrived on 22nd December, 1853, with a welcome cargo of coal obtained through the offices of the French Consul in Sydney. His letter brought news of grave tension between France, Turkey and Russia, which made the admiral anxious to leave at once. His departure became possible when on Christmas Day the Yankee ship arrived, and on New Year's Day he shifted his flag to the "Catinat" and sailed for Tahiti and Europe. He took to Tahiti four Caledonian exiles, their names Ondou, Michel, Dominico and Toulangui.

The "Phoque" stayed behind to look after French interests and await the arrival of the admiral's successor, Captain Tardy de Montravel on the "Constantine." She was among other things to call at the Isle of Pines with a present of a brace of pistols for Vandegou and the promise of a handsome full dress uniform so soon as the admiral

could send him one from America.

About this time, after suffering many privations, three missionaries and the crew of the "Etoile du Matin" were lost on the Astrolabe Reef or killed and eaten by the Tikopia blacks—little is known of their fate.

In April, 1853, some months prior to the Prise du Possession, the Bishop of Amata had died. The Touho natives on the east coast below Hienghene had been promised missionaries, and a number of Touhos were to join the Balade converts sent south. We may judge of the prevailing savagery from the following story.

During a pilou a young brother of the Touho chief noticed Apengu, chief of the Tiwaka tribe and a great cannibal, pass by. This chief's face was disfigured with a horrible cancer which had eaten away part of his nose and upper lip. Jokingly the young Touho man, little more than a child, pointed to a cooking pot and said in a low voice to his companions: "Here's a hat that would fit well on Apengu's head."

Unfortunately the remark reached the ears of Apengu, who said coldly: "I accept the hat he offers me, but I'll see that half the Touho tribe is cooked in it." He thereupon assembled his tayos and began to put his threat into effect: not content with killing and eating one of the brothers of the youth who had made the unfortunate remark, he carried on the vendetta until the Touhos had largely disappeared. The remnant asked the missionaries to come and live among them, but this did not discourage the Tiwakas from devastating the region; in fact, the knowledge that the white witch doctors were helping their enemies only increased their brutal determination to wipe them out.

Next year, 1855, there was trouble at Balade and the mission had again to be removed. This arose because Père Montrouzier, a fair-minded man who sided with natives when it was humanly possible so to do, finding them unmistakably in the wrong, supported the officer in charge of the military post in certain punitive measures.

Upon withdrawal this priest was invited by Governor du Bouzet to reside in Port-de-France, where he succeeded Fremault, the infant town's first parish priest. Under his ministration the Balade and Touho and other converts and infidels whose conversion was not despaired of were moved to the new establishments at Conception and St. Louis, on the plain eight miles from Noumea which had been taken from the natives and given to the Catholic fathers.

Meanwhile in the north Art, largest of the Belep Islands, also became a Catholic mission and has so remained to this day. But for the time being the Loyalty Islands remained firmly in the hands of the English Protestants, who thought of the group as a future British possession.

Chapter VII.

CODE FOR HEAD-HUNTERS

THE man who was to select the barren peninsula of Noumea as the Colony's capital now arrived on the scene. This was the energetic and display-loving young Capitaine de Vaisseau Tardy de Montravel.

Early in 1853 the corvette "Constantine" which he commanded left Rochefort for the China Seas and Japan. By the end of the year she was cruising between Shanghai and Hong-Kong watching the interests of French nationals, when she was ordered via the Solomons and New Hebrides to New Caledonia. Here her commander was ordered to complete Admiral Febvrier Despointes' work by showing his country's flag among the tribes and obtaining their allegiance to the Emperor.

He arrived at Balade to find the admiral had left, after installing a tiny garrison. Most of the tribes were not only unsubmissive but openly hostile, and the further south he went the more pronounced became their hostility.

Not only the missionaries needed help. At the time of his arrival a French three-master, the "Croix du Sud," built two years before at Bordeaux, had left Melbourne intending to call at the new French establishments in New Caledonian waters before continuing to the Moluccas. Doubling the south with the help of an inexact chart, the captain tried to cut through a non-existent pass to the inland sea and ran hard on the reef. His wife and he and crew of twelve took to their two small boats and made north for Balade, which they reached after seven days afloat. They reported that they had been threatened by naked savages whenever they approached the shore. The "Constantine" took care of them, and the "Prony" was sent south to get the "Etoile" off, but in vain.

While the "Constantine" was at Balade the chief of Poum was baptised at Baiao, adding Philip to his native name of Boueoné. In return for a few presents, he signed his land away to the whites without understanding what he was doing. In equally blissful ignorance he was the first to accept a code of European laws, depriving him among other things of the chief's most prized prerogative, the right to dispense justice with the blow of an axe.

The French commander tried to interest the natives in the suppression of crime; he pointed out the error of their ways and appointed chiefs as village constables whom he

promised to pay in sticks of tobacco, and whose badge of authority was an armband in the French colours. As long as he remained among them they seemed proud and eager to make arrests, but the moment he went away they relapsed into their cannibal ways and the code became null and void.

This is not to be wondered at, for the code was ludicrously optimistic considering the time and the circumstances, and generally there were no means of enforcing it. The document which the Poum, and later on other chiefs were called upon to endorse, accepted the sovereignty of Napoleon III and undertook, "in recognition of his protection which assures my new nationality," to see that French and other whites were not molested. The chief, "wishing himself and his subjects to participate in the rights and priivleges of all French citizens," was called upon to see that they renounced such "crimes" as murder followed by cannibalism, simple cannibalism, murder for vengeance, slaughter of the old and infirm, war, theft, arson, recourse to insults and blows, adultery, rape, disobedience to chiefs, perjury, etc.—a whole long list.

"Criminals" in the far north were to be handed over to the commander of the Balade blockhouse who would decide on the punishment to be inflicted. Cannibalism was to be severely dealt with and penalties for other offences were to be on a European scale: for simple murder without cannibalism, hard labour for life in chains; for rape, arson, and for hastening the death of the infirm, ten years hard; for theft, three months if from inside a building and one month if from a plantation; for stealing cooked food, for adultery and other crimes against public morals, eight days on public works; for inflicting injury by blows or wounds, from two months to four days in chains according to the gravity of the wound; and for insults and quarrelling, from six to three days. Dancing the pilou at night-time was forbidden on penalty of from three days to one day's imprisonment; and disobedience to a chief was punishable by a sentence of from one month to three days on public works. All fighting was prohibited among sections of a tribe, who must submit their quarrels to the chief. There were to be separate tribal gods for the two sexes.

Paul Cordeil, chief of the colony's judiciary round about 1880, writing of this code, says: "It may have amused Tardy de Montravel to play the little king and parade his men around among the natives, who looked on it as a funny kind of new game. Also this young and brilliant sailor may have thought his proclamations and the noise of his salutes would reach the ears of the powers that be in Paris, who

would reward him with the epaulettes of a rear-admiral. In any case the conquest of New Caledonia was not to be so simple and rapid as one might gather from reading accounts of these amiable demonstrations. Did the chiefs understand all this rigmarole about the white man's laws so light-heartedly presented them for their guidance? It is just possible, but whether they did or not they promptly went and broke them and for long enough the tribes remained in a state of active insurrection. The list of massacres, murders, thefts, cases of arson and serious trouble that one has to record in ensuing years is a long one, and far from trying to repress these deeds and hand over the wrong-doer, as they had promised, to the French authorities, the chiefs were usually the first to ignore our code and encourage hostilities against us."

Although Boueoné was the first to accept this famous code, he remained to the last a brutal cunning savage and the French were never able to trust him. It had been he who wore the soutane when the crew of the Yankee ship "The Cutter" were cut off and eaten, and he had been one of the most bitter in his acts against the missionaries, whose establishment he had helped to loot.

After completing the Balade blockhouse the "Constantine" dropped down the coast to Pouebo, territory of the tribe of Monelibé, pleasanter and more animated country than that further north. Here the priests had returned and had baptised one of the chiefs with the name Hippolyte. He proved useful, his authority counteracting that of another chief named Tarabaté, who refused to become a Christian on learning that he would have to send away three of his wives.

The "Constantine" had hardly anchored when Hippolyte came on board at the bidding of the fathers. The code was explained to him and next day an armed party went ashore to salute and hoist the flag, Tardy de Montravel seeking to impress the natives with the usual display. His expedition rowed up river to a big village where the whole tribe awaited them with curiosity, and received them with loud cries and the waving of weapons.

After a brief speech, which Hippolyte translated, he and Terebaté made their mark at the bottom of a document accepting French sovereignty. There followed a general distribution of tobacco and biscuits, with uniforms, weapons and axes for the chiefs. In their excitement the natives struck up a pilou, dancing and gesticulating to the sound of whistling and of bamboo rods beaten in time on the ground. The French admired their physique and their

agility, but found them brutal and coarse of feature, especially the woolly-haired women with their long and hanging breasts.

The Pouebo mission enjoyed many vicissitudes after the ship left. Schools and a seaside church were built, to which the bones of Mgr. d'Amata were transferred. But the place won a sad celebrity during the massacres of 1867, leading to a military expedition from Noumea, and the expiation by death and starvation of many a misguided savage. Oubatche, picturesque locality eight miles lower down the coast, also joined in this revolt; then military posts were established and European colonists began to drift in to cultivate corn and rice, coffee and copra and to raise pigs. The process of civilisation at last got under way.

The further south the "Constantine" went the less well disposed the natives seemed to be; the influence of the missionaries ceased making itself felt, and the explanation of the new code became more and more difficult. Nevertheless the flag-hoisting ceremonies continued to attract large excited crowds. Tardy de Montravel had another important consideration in mind, he was looking for likely places to establish permanent European settlement. Thus five years after he called there Canala was to be baptised Napoleonville—a name that disappeared with the Second Empire.

At Hienghene there was of course grand chief Bouarat to win over. Anchoring beside the Towers of Notre Dame, de Montravel felt it was high time definitely to pledge this chief's allegiance. He ordered a display of goodwill towards the many canoe-loads of natives who paddled out to the ship; they were invited on board and there was an exchange of gifts. But Bouarat was not among them, and it was feared he might refuse to submit.

So next day an officer was sent with an armed escort to tell him if he did not present himself on board by ten o'clock next morning, the commander would land and hoist the flag without his consent. The least show of opposition and he would be deprived of his territories, which would become the property of the French.

The chief was found seated on his mat, before his main hut, gun in hand. With some difficulty he was persuaded on board, where he was treated with more consideration than he had expected. After some hesitation he promised to assemble his people at his principal village the following day.

Next day a flotilla of eight boats pulled for the shore.

From them landed 250 sailors and soldiers, including a few artillerymen with five small cannon. They were greeted by a native host armed with every kind of weapon, including a few guns and axes of English manufacture. Tardy de Montravel read out the act of possession, salutes were fired by the "Constantine" and the cannon ashore, and the flag hoisted, while Bourat and his chiefs put their marks to a document accepting French sovereignty.

The following day the commander paid Bouarat an official visit at his village upstream. Like many Caledonian rivers the Hienghene is barred by a large coral plateau leaving only a narrow entrance at the south side of the bay. The river winds to the sea swollen by waters descending from the bush-clad mountains along abrupt side-valleys. Up this stream the flotilla now made its way, yelling natives following like people at a boat race, armed men in the lead and women and children bringing up the rear.

It took two hours to reach the tall huts and coconut plantations of the royal abode, and here Bouarat appeared standing on the sloping green surrounded by 300 of his tayos. The whites paraded before his towering cone-shaped residence, crowned with the customary grotesque wooden sculpture human of form and many feet high. Right and left of the green were other beehive huts and beyond rose an oval-shaped hillock with seven posts. These posts were usually crowned with human skulls, but for to-day's ceremony Tardy de Montravel had stipulated that trophies of the chase should be removed.

While Bouarat, wearing a blue woollen shirt, grouped his warriors around him, the women and children looked shyly on from the shelter of huts and trees. The soldiers executed a few military movements and fired volleys and cannon salutes while the French flag was ceremoniously handed to the grand chief as token of his new nationality. Profiting from the impression the ceremony seemed to be making, the commander exacted a formal promise—one which needless to say was only kept while he was in the vicinity—that no more cannibalism would be indulged in. Among civilised men, he explained, this was regarded as the most heinous and loathsome of crimes. Bouarat was also forbidden to poleaxe human victims.

After an exchange of presents the chief was invited to join the officers at a meal whose principal item was a barbecued sheep. The rank and file also sat down to an al fresco lunch beneath the coconuts, excited natives crowding round them and fighting for any scraps they tossed aside.

For a few months after the Frenchmen's visit Bouarat

and his allies remained fairly quiet, but their reformation was too good to last, and we have seen how the following year brought a pronounced backsliding.

The "Constantine" and the "Phoque" now sailed south, looking for a suitable harbour where the colony's capital could be established. They stopped at the bay of Canala, were grand chief Aliki-Kai came on board and proudly returned to his village clad in military trousers and cap, with an old sword slung by his side. At his Negropo residence he was charmed to show the French his cannibal trophies, and after this allowed them ceremoniously to hoist their flag. Then the two ships left for the Isle of Pines.

It is not to be wondered at if Tardy de Montravel's influence was but temporary. The taming of the New Caledonian native was by the nature of things to prove a long and arduous process. "To-day, more than thirty years after our official occupation," wrote Noumea's Public Prosecutor in 1885, "we are unable to anticipate or repress most of the crimes and massacres committed in the tribes, and it is only imperceptibly that our influence is penetrating among the natives whom we are supposed to have subjugated."

Charles Lemire, who as head of the telegraphic commission travelled the Colony extensively in the early 1880's, found the natives still preferred to speak English and seemed almost ashamed to admit that they knew any French. But even in Noumea at that time more English was spoken than French, the reason being that most of the early settlers and prospectors had come from Australia, and were not of French origin. This of course changed with the growth of French population; while to-day theoretically every native boy and girls gets elementary schooling in the French language. Also in the course of time a simplified "kanak French" has been developed, a language which Georges Baudoux reproduces beautifully in some of his stories.

New Caledonia was to go through some serious native revolts before the kanak was fully and completely brought under control. The last of these belongs to modern history, for in 1917, during the first World War, chief Noel of Koniambo with 300 followers raised the standard of revolt and murdered sixteen white colonists. It took months of chase, and a pitched battle behind Hienghene, before the warriors dispersed and their leader was hunted to death.

A measure of sympathy and admiration should go to the early settlers in the Caledonian bush, who built their

homes at isolated river mouths surrounded by wild native tribes, lacking road communication with the outside world, and with but rare and uncertain shipping facilities. When they set out for the wilds they were indeed taking their lives in their hands.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FOUNDING OF NOUMEA

BY the time of Tardy de Montravel's arrival a peaceable state of affairs had been established on the Isle of Pines, where many natives were on the way to conversion. The scene of loot and massacre had shifted to the mainland.

Scattered with strange pine-clad islets, its narrow coastal fringe of coconut palms backed by arid ironstone mountains, red, yellow and black, which glow like fire as the sun rises and sets, the southern coast of New Caledonia offers a magnificent spectacle to the traveller by sea, making acquaintance for the first time with the vast Bay of Prony, and its subsidiary bays, the Carenage and the Baie du Sud.

But in the times of which I am writing it was a lonely and a sinister coast, inhabited by the wild and warlike Touaourous. Now and again might be seen a naked warrior with spear or sling standing on one of the southern promontories like Cap N'Dua—here that rarity in New Caledonia, real cliffs and a white line of surf along the shore—looking out towards the famous bore of the Havannah passage or towards the reefs beyond Ile Ouen where the white ships passed to the wide shallow Bay of Morari and the strikingly indented peninsula of Noumea.

It was at Morari Bay, backed by beautiful, ever-changing twin-peaked Mont Dore, that Tardy de Montravel first thought of establishing the capital of the colony. He found coal there which was tried out—with success, he says —on the "Prony," but the deposit must have been small as nothing is heard of it to-day. But this fine stretch of water was too exposed and difficult for shipping, so he moved on, from one possible haven to another.

Thus it was that he came at length to the new harbour he had heard tell of, where the Englishman Paddon was already established. The sea was a joyous spectacle, dotted with coral islets, phosphorescent at night-time and in the day alive with fish jumping everywhere and flying fish skimming the water. (To-day also native-owned Loyalty schooners reel by, their decks ablaze with manou-clad men and women singing harmonious chants for the sheer joy of being alive.)

But in the 1850's the natives and the French were daggers drawn. People were only just becoming aware of

the wild district called Noumea, native name meaning peninsula.

There were already tales of massacre. In October, 1847, a Sydney vessel, the "Vanguard," coming from the New Hebrides, had ventured through the Boulari Pass, where French naval ratings were in 1865 to build the biggest lighthouse in the Pacific, and anchored at Emmeguea, sheltered bay which has become Noumea's suburb of Port Despointes. Two boats' crews, numbering eight men in all including the master, went ashore and prepared to load sandalwood.

Under the pretext that they would not pay the price agreed upon in axes and other trade goods, the Houias, led by their chief Jack Angara (called "Angulla" in the contemporary English account), massacred all on the spot. The chief is supposed to have plotted the seizure of the vessel at the same time, but those on board having been made aware of the occurrence by some canoes from the shore, got the vessel away and placed her in safety. Paddon's agent Rodd, who was then acting as mate of the "Avon" schooner, informed of the incident, came along three months later to look for the murderers. Landing on the beach in charge of one of the boats, he was immediately fallen on by a band of tayos. It was in this affray he lost an eye and a hand. He was rescued by his crew, who included natives of Tanna, the most Polynesian seeming of New Hebridean islanders.

Later on Angara was to give the infant township of Noumea a great deal of trouble. But in 1847 no reasons were alleged for the determined hostility of his tribe, either by Rodd himself or by Stephens, who had been one of the "Vanguard's" crew. Admiral (then Captain) Erskine, who investigated the happening, was given to understand that the chief, who had bargained to supply one cargo of sandalwood, was led to believe that part of it had been removed in other vessels, and that he was to be required to make up the deficiency before securing payment.

The "Havannah," following this investigation, went to the Noumea district, and had Angara brought on board. He was told he would have to return the two "Vanguard" whaleboats which had either been retained by him or handed over to his companion chief Kunedo (Kandio). He was held prisoner while Lieutenant Payne was, for a second time, sent to Kandio's village with a request for the latter to come on board.

"Mr. Payne did not return with the boats until half-past nine o'clock, having rowed up to the head of a deep

bight, off the mouth of which lies the island of Nou, forming an excellent harbour, with seven, eight and nine fathoms of water, close up to Kunedo's village. The chief himself was not forthcoming, but Mr. Payne was civilly received by one of inferior grade, who informed him that one of the boats was utterly destroyed, and the other had to be given to the grand chief Titema (Watton), a few miles further to the westward."

Erskine's words form the first written recognition of the qualities of one of the most beautiful harbours of the Pacific, fit to rank with Sydney, Auckland and Wellington, destined because of her position on the coast to become the colony's capital and by reason of her strategic situation as Australasia's Crete to become one of the Allies' main bases during the present war, a bastion, as Henri Sautot aptly called her, of Pacific freedom.

Choice of a west coast port for capital was inevitable, since it was from Sydney that New Caledonia was to draw her life blood of free colonists and also, down to our own day, her foodstuffs and perishable goods; it was through Sydney, too, that the main postal traffic was for so many years to be conducted.

There was, before the arrival of Admiral Febvrier Despointes, only one other possibility. If Sir George Grey had had his way New Caledonia would have been already attached to the Dominion of New Zealand, and Noumea would then have become a satellite of Auckland. But the Colonial Office was too busy to listen, and turned a deaf ear to the Governor's recommendation.

In the Mitchell Library in Sydney there is also a document entitled "Printed Prospectus for Forming a Settlement (in New Caledonia) Forwarded by Major Sullivan. G. Gibbs' Despatch, 1842." When last I visited Sydney I was unable to consult this document as the library was undergoing re-arrangement. But does it not concern a proposal made about that time to settle the island with German immigrants under British auspices? It would be interesting to find out.

It was in June, 1854, that Tardy de Montravel, seeing this grand sheltered harbour for the first time, decided to found the capital here and to call it Port-de-France, a name which lasted until 1865, when it was changed to Noumea because of postal confusion with Fort-de-France in Martinique.

Truth to tell, the peninsula from the point of view of soil fertility and water supply was an unhappy choice. There is no river nearby and the hills are dry and barren,

such coarse grass as grows on them being useless for pasture, while the niaouli (eucalyptus) trees around are of little use except for firewood. The town was to remain without regular water supply for some decades, a plan to bring it from the nearest creeks five or six miles away not being feasible as these dry up in the months when water is needed most. So until 1878 the inhabitants had to put up with rain water and distilled sea water sold expensively to householders from bullock drays. Also most of the central area was a swamp which convicts later filled in to make the modern port.

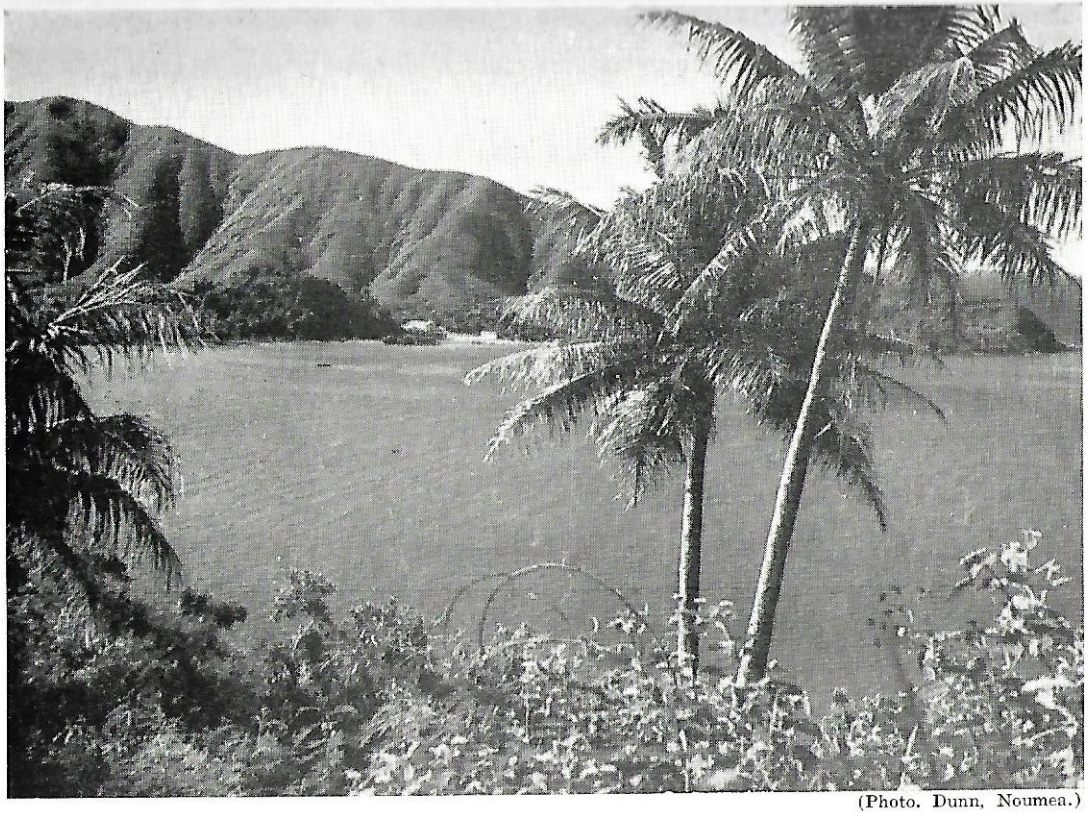
Noumea nevertheless chose itself by reason of its accessibility to Australia, because sailing ships could enter in all weathers and anchor in perfect security, because of its adaptability as a naval base and ease of defence, and because it fulfilled the conditions believed necessary for a penitentiary establishment—the declared intention of the French Government.

Paddon, moving his establishment from Anatom to Ile Nou, was the first to take advantage of its strategic position. It was he, from his vast trading station on Paddon Bay (in our days occupied by Pan-American Airways) who after the French occupation directed the industrial, commercial and agricultural life of the infant colony. His fleet of ships ran the first postal service with Sydney, brought most of the early pioneers; he was the first successfully to raise cattle, and to found a bush township, the still flourishing village of Paita.

All the while he was fully engaged in the sandalwood trade, in the purchase of turtle-shell, in whaling, and in trading with the natives wherever his agents could penetrate. On the hills above his island home, with its great storehouses facing across the inner harbour, flanked by offices and houses for his white and native employees, would be placed keen-eyed native look-outs to report immediately all comings and goings of the port.

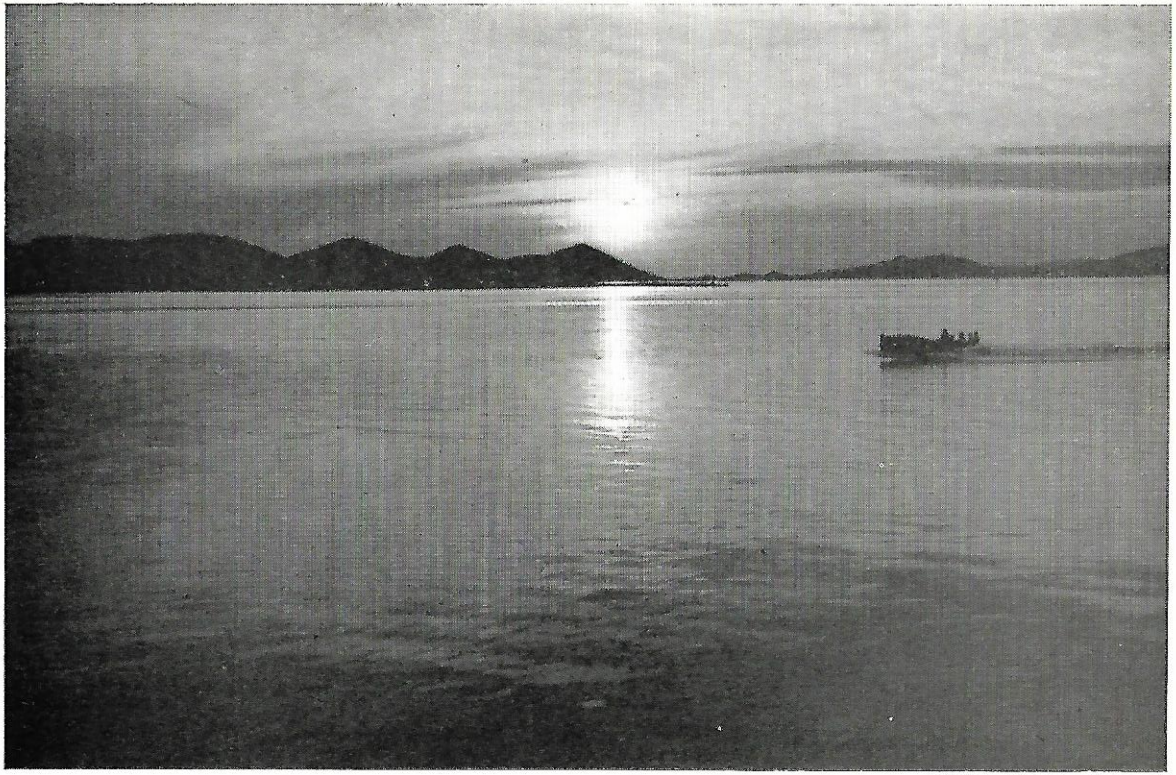
Sometimes news would come in that there were whales in the vicinity of the outer reefs, and his boats would leave for the chase, seven men in each, the officer in the stern, the harpooner in the bow and five men rowing. Those were the days when the human harpooner, the man of vigorous arm and unerring throw, counted for something in the Pacific. They were the days of Moby Dick.

Nor was whaling round the coast to be despised. It is on record that in 1862 in the north-west of the colony the whaler "Winslow" captured 21 whales in three months, yielding 900 barrels of oil. Years after Paddon's death the



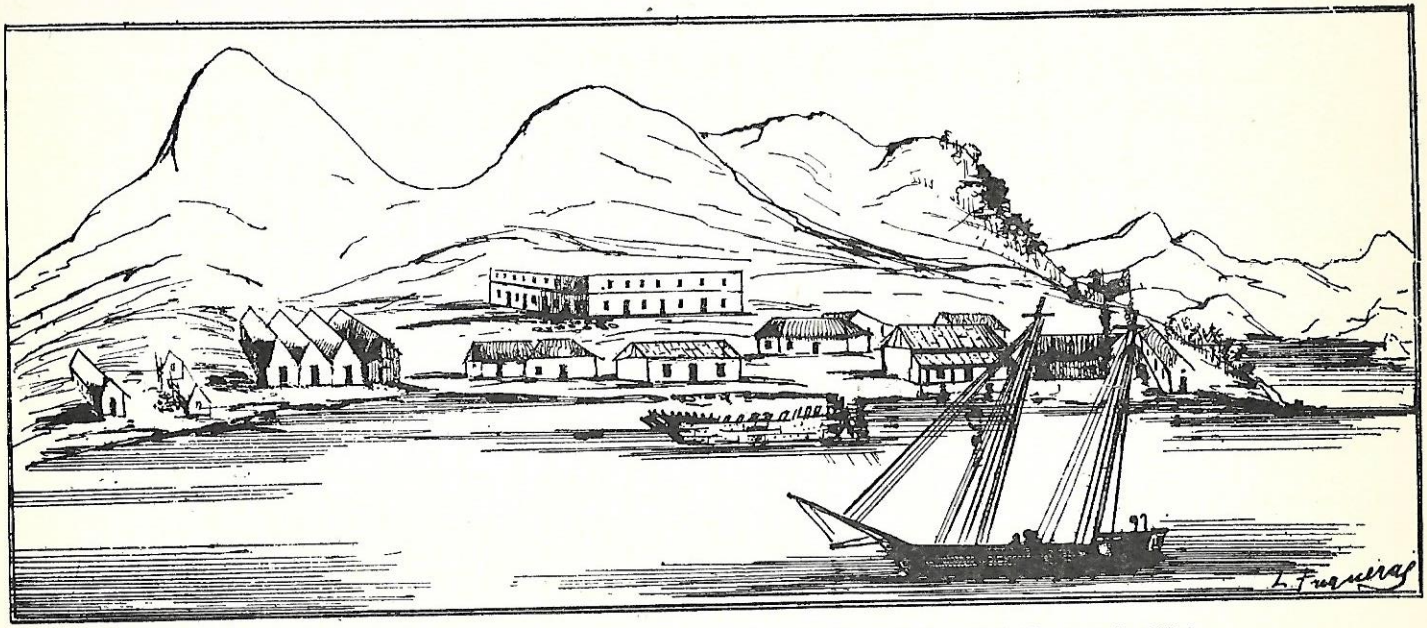
(Photo. Dunn, Noumea.)

Bouarat's cannibal stronghold was at the head of this beautiful bay, typical of many where murder lay in wait for unwary missionaries and mariners. In Sydney Bouarat learnt to eat with knife and fork; the papers called him "Cannibal King of New Caledonia."



(Photo. Médard, Noumea.)

Tranquil waters of beautiful Noumea harbour, with 3-mile long Ile Nou in the background. New Caledonia's history is still bound up with this islet, which helps to make Noumea an ideal naval and military base for present-day South Pacific operations.



Paddon's establishment at Ile Nou as it was when the French founded Noumea in 1854. They bought the island from him to turn it into a penitentiary, but the deserted prison buildings, which used to house three thousand convicts, were torn down in 1939 to make way for Pan-American Airways base.

(From an old sketch.)

official newspaper, the "Moniteur Imperial" (24th October, 1869) informed its readers that many English and American whalers had begged the administration for authorisation to hunt whales in the region of the Loyalties. At the same time the masters of these ships, needing men for their exploitation, asked for permission to engage native crews. Both requests were granted on certain conditions and the governor told his Lifou representative to encourage the industry by all the means in his power.

This hard and perilous enterprise called for skill of a high order, but has been so magnificently described by Anglo-Saxon writers that there is no need to go into details here. But Paddons was the depot, and the fight over, we can imagine these monsters being towed through the Boulari pass and hoisted by derricks on to the pier, where they would be cut up into strips and carried to the blubber-room.

Whale oil was also shipped to Noumea from the New Hebrides. In his book "Cannibals and Convicts," published in London in 1886 but dealing with old days in the Pacific, Julian Thomas writes: "The price (at Noumea) was £26 a ton. The yield varied from 1½ to 7 tons of oil per whale, but the latter would be considered a large fish. The average might be taken at 4½ tons. The Greenland whales, I am told, averaged 17 tons. The natives here (South Seas) carry away whale meat for food after the blubber is cut off. In this season of plenty they would make fires on the beach and dance and sing as at Harvest Home. The missionaries objected to this as perpetuating heathen customs. The men were all paid in cash, and they could realise a very nice sum in a good year. The natives liked the work, which was the only thing in the shape of exciting sport which entered into their lives. They laid out their dollars in stores, tobacco, calico, etc."

The settlers who came on Paddon's ships had mostly spent some time in Australia, but land hunger and the thirst for adventure urged them even further afield. Surrounded by hostile savages, aiding each other, fighting the same difficulties, suffering the same privations and sharing the same simple joys, this handful of men of different nationalities, many of whom Paddon employed, lived together like members of one family. It is pleasant to pay tribute to their memory, particularly as many lie in forgotten graves up and down the reef-sheltered coast.

The progress of Port-de-France in the beginning was painfully slow, slower even than that of early Perth. There were massacres and sieges, and once Paddon had to inter-

vene to save the place from being wiped out. A few years later, over the Hienghene affair, Paddon himself temporarily fell foul of the governor, and found it prudent with a crew of native boys to escape to Sydney in an open whaleboat. But the colony could not get on without him and soon welcomed him back. The boat lay beached at Paddon Bay for years afterwards and his children used to regard it with awe, saying to one another: "Look at the boat papa escaped to Sydney in."

Paddon made a fortune, and his reputation for generosity and fair-dealing is proverbial. Scattered round the coasts were his representatives, rough sailormen who took their lives in their hands, and to whom he was both captain and friend; and when he voyaged among the tribes he was royally received. He was an amazing man.

The first real emigrants to arrive after the French took possession did not, however, come on a Paddon ship. They were not foreigners but six Frenchmen who refused to take the advice of their consul in Sydney that the island was not yet open to settlement. Saying that they wanted to live in a French possession, they left on an Austrian ship which landed them at Balade.

Their names were Raymond, afterwards killed by the Touaourous of Ounia; Dalèt, of no particular occupation; Daviet, who had been police commissioner of the French Republic after Louis Philippe was turned out by the 1848 revolution, and who afterwards died miserably at Port-de-France; Ronet, a brickmaker; Janin, ex-bartender, who went into partnership with Ronet, but both disappeared when their enterprise failed; and finally Collet, who deserted from the "Prony" in Sydney, and who in New Caledonia tried to pass himself off as a naval officer until the governor heard about it and told him to behave.

On their arrival these men were without money or resources. The officer in command of the Balade blockhouse took charge of Raymond, and Père Montrouzier took the rest under his wing. Collet alone made a success of things, first at Port-de-France and later at Huailu and Canala, where he ran a trading schooner. A few years later he went into partnership with a man named Noblot who voyaged along the coast, while ashore Collet managed the store. Noblot had arrived on Paddon's ship "Speck." It was these two who took on the contract to build the Canala blockhouse.

A settler whose death figures largely in subsequent events was Mr. Bérard. He had been assistant purser of the "Alcmène" at the time of the Yanguibane massacre, but

in 1855 he resigned from the Navy and became associated with the firms of Vial d'Aram, Millières and Kressler & Co., of Sydney. He also started a butchery in Port-de-France, where he built himself a house in the Quartier Latin suburb. This house was burnt down by the native who later murdered him.

Among other notabilities to arrive at this time were Pannetrat and Macé. Pannetrat, whose adventures are related elsewhere, sold out his Canala property to Macé in return for a clock invention that he believed might bring him a fortune. Later he became Canala's first magistrate with Macé as his clerk-of-court.

The first white child was born in Port-de-France at 10 p.m. on 23rd April, 1856. He was an English boy named Oliver and he was christened William Benjamin Felix. His father, Noumea port pilot, was eventually buried on an islet in the Bay of Prony which mariners still call "Pilot's Island." The maiden name of the boy's mother was Jane Ann Richards.

Two years later a second white boy was born, Theodore Lachaume, his father French and his mother an Englishwoman née Rathbone. The following March saw the arrival of the first baby girl, Rose Catherine Durand, whose descendants are still in the colony. Her mother was an Irishwoman named Hurley. The oldest Caledonian-born white woman alive to-day is Miss le Clerc, Sister of Mercy at La Conception. She is well over 80.

Like all infant colonies, New Caledonia suffered from a serious shortage of womenfolk. Thinking to overcome this lack, the Sisters of St. Joseph came to an arrangement with the Assistance Publique at Paris, and brought out foundling girls whom they lodged in a building in the bay since known as the Orphelinat, on the corniche road to Anse Vata beach. This to-day is Noumea's most agreeable residential suburb.

The first convoy of ten girls arrived in September, 1863. The men of the place donned collars and ties, curled their beards and rode down the wharf to look them over. Tradition has it that before the end of the year all ten were married, some to quite well-to-do colonists and officials.

Altogether some sixty young orphans were brought out, Governor Guillain's idea being to increase the population. It is said, however, that many of the girls only looked for lovers, who were not hard to find among civil functionnaires and officers of the garrison. Ribald songs were made about them of which (in part) the following is one:

Voici des femmes, enfin!
Merci, cher Monsieur Guillain.
.....
D'après le rapport des soeurs,
Ces jeunes filles n'ont pas de moeurs.
.....
Voulez-vous rentrer en France?
Voici le plus sûr moyen:
Faites-vous l'heureux soutien
D'une enfant de l'Assistance;
Vite, Monsieur le Gouverneur
Vous renvoie par un clipper.

In the end the local authorities began to feel that some of these young women were going a bit too far in the way of free living and tried to persuade them into regular and permanent attachments. The result was that some hastily got themselves married in Noumea, others left for Tahiti, while the remainder, to use the words of a contemporary, "cleared out heaven knows where." On the whole the results of the experiment had not been up to expectations; nevertheless a percentage did make good and loyal wives for some of the earliest colonists.

CHAPTER IX.

EARLY SETTLEMENTS

WHEN the French bought him out at Ile Nou for 60,000 francs, Paddon moved to Paita, twenty miles away, where with a big grant of land he introduced a valuable influx of settlers, of whom eighteen families remained in permanence. They included his relatives the Martins, from England; and from Australia, of British and German extraction, the Lynches, Watsons, Sleaths and Ambroses, the Abels, Ohlens, Gaertners, Metzgers and Yeomans. These settlers had to send their produce to town by boat, for no road yet linked them with Noumea.

Their children spoke a quaint mixture of English, French and German, with a sprinkling of native words. The parents met and decided to start a school for them, raising a fund to pay a schoolmaster. The Catholics then came along and built a chapel and a mission, and although most of the settlers were English Protestants or German Lutherans, they used all to go to church together, a rare example of large mindedness in matters of faith, showing the state of neighbourliness which made this the most successful of Caledonian settlements, and for which Paddon was primarily responsible.

The name Paita seems to have been derived from that of the local grand chief, son of Kuindo. His father used to see the English sailors fighting with bare fists and to hear them use the word "Fight." Kanak fashion, he thought this would make a good name for his son, whom he hoped would become a great warrior. Soon the word became corrupted first to "Fighta" and then to "Paita."

From a trip to China Paddon brought back another well-known colonist. This was the Chinese Jimmy Song, a thorough gentleman to whom nobody ever went in vain for a meal or a night's lodging, in fact he hated hearing his guests say good-bye. For anybody he specially liked he would prepare sea-slug soup Chinese fashion. It was Jimmy's hobby to cross sheep and goats on his farm at Tongoué. His grandsons, French citizens, are at the time of writing, serving in the deserts of North Africa with the Free French Forces; they left Noumea with the Caledonian volunteers on 5th May, 1941.

It was Paddon who gave his first job in the colony to Higginson, reputedly that of wheeling stones in a barrow from wharf to store. This Higginson was another extra-

ordinary man. A former Australian jockey, born at Hitchin in England, he eventually became New Caledonia's flamboyant financial genius, feted in Paris by the Rothschilds—the man who introduced international capital to build the nickel industry when this country was the world's sole producer. The great Sociétê le Nickel which is the chief power in the island derives from him. Later he did all in his power to make the French supreme in the New Hebrides. He was a shortish, dapper man, of lively intelligence, not afraid of running up debts, who customarily went about in a frock coat and top hat incessantly smoking a cigar.

Caporn, another settler, came to Port-de-France on a three weeks' visit to Paddon in 1857, but stayed on thirty-five years. Hoff, for a time one of Paddon's principal assistants, was another colonist who took up land.

An unforgettable character was Captain Donald McLeod, born in Nova Scotia, a New Hebridian pioneer and uncle of the Kerr brothers, island traders of to-day. He finally rests ashore, in Noumea's fourth kilometre cemetery; but living he preferred to sleep aboard his schooner, a custom which other of his Hebridean confreres would have done better to have followed.

In the early days there were 400 traders along these coasts, but many went out of business and left the colony when a law—one harmful to local progress and normal development—was introduced refusing licences to foreign traders. In more modern times the French have encouraged the Japanese, who rapidly became the largest storekeepers in the country, selling and buying in all white settlements and native tribes, and controlling many local industries. What a stranglehold they had was only realised when they were interned after Pearl Harbour; yet some of the Vichy French were sorry to see them go.

In the no-man's-land of possession days there settled in the north sailorfolk and others—the Williams, Winchesters, Henrys, Henwoods and Fords. Lynn, a big Dane, came to rule over the Belep isle of Pott. It was he who discovered the Walpole Island guano deposits. Three bachelor brothers of a well-known South Australian family who made their home in the colony and grew handsome beards (as their photographs testify) were William, Frank and Jack Morgan. Jack used to run a Noumea flour mill. Cheval, a restauranteur from Sydney, took up land at St. Vincent, and introduced some Irish-Australian families, notably the O'Donoghues and the Dalys. Their history is

told in Mlle. Lainé's book, "Pioneer Days in New Caledonia."

Bouloupari—place name meaning "red earth"—situated fifty miles from the capital, became a cattle-raising centre, full of Britons. There were Tom Lewis, Bobby Henderson, Peter Walker, the Bull family, Begg, a London-Italian named Panorma, and a rich Anglo-Indian named Atkinson, whose son, James Jasper, became a Sydney "Bulletin" artist.

Bouloupari was in the thick of the great kanak revolt of 1878, but the blacks spared the English settlers except for Bobby Henderson's brother who was massacred while dining with French military warders at a nearby convict camp. One of the Bull sons has told me how, a boy of six, a native found him and hid him and his brother during the first five days of the outbreak.

Other early settlements were less successful than Paita or Bouloupari. Australians named Byrne and Brown took up a huge concession, but failed to introduce the large number of white and Indian settlers agreed upon. Another failure (in 1862) was a French community experiment known as the Phalanstère, at Yaté. This was a Utopian scheme encouraged by the governor. But successful or unsuccessful, the men of the first hour who contributed to the making of New Caledonia should not be forgotten.

After the dismal end of the Sonora expedition to Mexico and the shooting of the leader, an adventurer named Count Raousset de Boulbon, a party composed principally of Frenchmen drifted first to California, where they took part in the gold rush, and then from 'Frisco to Sydney. Here they discussed a project to form a colonisation company in New Caledonia.

They left Australia on 15th September, 1855, and after thirty-five days at sea arrived in view of the east coast opposite the Pass of Nakety. They entered the inland sea and anchored at Paddon's Bay at Canala. Before they left the captain of the vessel had promised to land them at Ouagap, forty miles below Hienghene, but now he refused to go further, so his passengers were obliged to disembark. This proved no laughing matter, for Aliki-Kai and his toughs assembled on the beach and showed themselves hostile.

Fortunately Captain Paddon had a trading station nearby at a place named Quatre Bras, looked after by a sailor named Jim, on good terms with the blacks, and he came along to act as go-between, finally persuading Aliki-Kai to agree to allow the Frenchmen to land; but as soon

as this was done their ship, without troubling any more about their fate, set sail and disappeared over the horizon.

For several days M. Pannetrat, the expedition's leader, who used to carry Count de Boulbon's sword around with him, had prolonged interviews with the chiefs of the surrounding district. There was a considerable exchange of presents and finally the newcomers were authorised to instal themselves on the large hill which subsequently housed the Canala blockhouse. Huts were built for each of the party and Pannetrat organised work and native labour. He had an ample grant of land which he divided up into paddocks and assigned to different crops. In time the land was ploughed and seed sown. Here it was that the first New Caledonian pineapples were planted. Native labourers were paid a small wage which they spent on tobacco and finery.

When all seemed to be going well, Pannetrat decided to go to Port-de-France to acquaint the governor of his arrival and obtain his support. He was accompanied by F. Knoblauch, an immensely tall German. Legend has it that he was a seven-footer who always had to stoop entering doorways, wore enormous boots which he had specially made for him in Sydney, was hairless and a hermaphrodite. He used to carry a small pocket pistol with a useless trigger to awe the natives, but they were superstitiously afraid of him anyway. Afterwards he became Paddon's head clerk and trusted man, and he has left an account of that, as he calls him, "extraordinary personage" which he wrote out in English, German and French—the French manuscript at least is still in Noumea.

On Paddon's death, Knoblauch went into business on his own account, and then with a partner, a German named Charles Gerber. Eventually, round about the 80's, he went to Sydney, where he became an art master, and where apparently he died. A Caledonian once saw him the cause of a commotion in the theatre there. People in the rows behind were calling out to him to sit down, caustically remarking that they would not mind seeing a bit of the stage. Actually Knoblauch was seated, but his head and shoulders so towered about those near him that it appeared from behind as if he was standing.

His journey with Pannetrat deserves an honoured place in Caledonian annals for it was the first crossing of the islands by Europeans. The country between east and west coasts is high, broken and extremely difficult. A "New York Times" war corespondent in 1942 likened the new road which links Canala to La Foa to the Burma Road.

The two men had for escort six natives under Pointi, son of Zeglandi, a Canala grand chief. Rising from shoreline they passed through a magnificent kauri forest and then plunged into more tangled vegetation through which they had to hack their way step by step. Occasionally they came on sections of old native tracks, but these did not lead them far. They saw sandalwood in abundance in the poorer mountain soil, and before them rose clouds of green pigeons, parrakeets and other birds.

It took them two days to get to the top of the second of the two main ridges of the Chaine Centrale, which is not a real chain at all but a bewilderingly broken series of high mountains and plateaux running in general with the axis of the island. Up to now they had met with hard climbing conditions but no danger; but on the third day, beginning their descent to the St. Vincent plain, they came upon a ferocious war party who blocked their path brandishing axes, tomahawks and spears.

Pannetrat, who was armed, stood his ground and prepared to defend himself, but Knoblauch realised that stratagem was better than defiance. It occurred to him that the native mind has a superstitious dread of those whom heaven has afflicted with madness; so, before the war-painted tayos advanced too close, there was this abnormally tall German with the large mouth sitting down on a tree-stump talking and grimacing to himself and uttering roars of insane laughter.

The kanaks stopped and watched him, their eyes bulging. Meanwhile Pannetrat told Pointi to explain that they were peaceful intruders, and to explain where they were going. These explanations seemed to satisfy the natives, who pointed out that nobody was allowed to traverse the tribal domains without their grand chief's permission. The whites asked to be conducted before this personage whom they presented with bead necklaces, plug tobacco, pipes and matches, in return for which he readily gave them permission to proceed.

Finally, after five days through the bush, they reached Paita and were hospitably received by grand chief Kuindo, who staged a pilou in their honour so impressive that 500 tayos took part. Then, after an exchange of presents, they took the road to the tiny port of Gadgi, and embarked by canoe for Ile Nou, where they were put up by Paddon. Next day they crossed the inner harbour to Port-de-France.

Their arrival surprised the inhabitants, who had hardly credited vague reports of their arrival and establishment on the east coast. The governor, du Bouzat, was on leave

in France and Major Testard was acting governor. He confirmed the purchase of property from the natives by the Pannetrat Agricultural Company. With this official approval in his pocket, and the promise of several Noumea residents to interest themselves financially in the Canala enterprise, Pannetrat took the return route by sea.

In the first year of Noumea's existence the priests had formed the project of establishing villages near the township, grouping there converts from tribes all over the island, including those brought from Balade, Pouebo and Touho. The governor allotted them 5,000 acres at a place named La Conception six miles south of the town. The converts were set to work building a church, buildings for the priests and village huts for themselves. A blockhouse was built behind the church by sailors from the "Bayonaise" who for a time provided the garrison.

By 1866 the population numbered 300, for numerous kanaks, including disinherited remnants of the local Boularis, harassed out of existence, took refuge there. The mission developed rich plantations of bananas, mangoes, taros, yams. But during the difficult early period when bands of dispossessed natives roamed the region killing the whites, the village lived under military protection and underwent at least one serious attack.

The same conditions prevailed at nearby St. Louis, founded a year later. This eventually became one of the richest settlements, endowed by the priests with water-race, sawmill, sugar mill and rum factory from which excellent rum was sold in the colony for five francs per bottle. This was in the days before France killed the local rum trade in the interests of Martinique. In more recent years rice has successfully been cultivated at St. Louis, but by Japanese tenants since the natives vastly prefer church-going to work.

The St. Louis grant was 8,000 acres, and here spacious buildings in the European style sprang up. The village is backed by nickel-rich mountains mined just before the war by Krupps. Up the tiny St. Louis river are attractive forests resembling those of New Zealand, and the heights around are the haunt of deer. Like Conception this mission needed military protection at the outset.

This was because grand chief Kuindo of Paita and his allies Kunedo and Jack Angara were furious at being dispossessed of this land stretching to the La Coulée River, and also of tribal lands granted to colonists—notably to M. Bérard—at Morari Bay. They preferred threats against

the missionaries and swore they would only deal with the English and that they would drive the French away. The latter sent out whaleboats from the "Bayonnaise" to watch their moves, with orders to capture and destroy hostile canoes.

On one occasion the navy men surprised two large double canoes at a small islet not far from La Conception Bay. The tayos, some forty of them, declared they were fishing for turtle, but the French would not listen to their story, fearing they were waiting to attack the mission. So they rounded up the blacks and took them to desolate Mâ Peninsula, from which they must have had a long walk home. Their two canoes, rather unfairly one must think, were handed over to the mission natives.

The St. Louis mission seems to have been the first to receive sheep. That was in 1856. Nine years later the government brought out two rams and nine sheep from the Cape of Good Hope, by the "Isis," and some time later eighty-two of their progeny were sold at public auction. But it was soon found that sheep do not thrive in the colony owing to the presence of spear grass which pierces wool and organs, raising fatal abscesses.

The cattle industry, however, flourishes. Paddon's original herd had increased to a few thousand at the time of his death. In 1859 the government took a hand by importing on a large scale to build up what has become the island's chief industry next to mining. To-day there are over a hundred thousand head and a modern canning works at Ouáco on the west coast.

Mr. Boutan seems to have imported the first horses—two stallions and nine mares—by the tiny man-o'-war "Fulton," and the first race meeting was held at Anse Vata beach (not Magenta as is usually stated) on 16th August, 1864. The first race on the programme was won by Frank Metzger, then a lad of fourteen and son of one of Paddon's colonists. A ladies' race figured on the programme four years later, and was won by a mare named Fanny owned by Mr. Lynch and ridden by a Miss C——.

The colony, so closely linked with Australia, had already adopted many Anglo-Saxon words which are still in use, like "creek," "paddock," "muster," "bucker" (for "buck-jumper"), "mob," "stockwhip," "stockyard," "stockman," "run," etc.

A little rice seems to have been experimentally grown by Père Montrouzier as early as 1852, but the first grower of any importance was M. Bayeul, who was cultivating the

grain for the Noumea market at Nakety near Canala as early as 1865. Since then, though this country could easily supply its own needs, the local industry has been killed in favour of imports from Indo-China. Père Montrouzier was the first to send samples of Caledonian timber to Europe. To-day the colony imports soft woods from America and exports kauri and furniture timbers to Australia.

We first hear of Caledonian coffee being sent overseas in 1862, when it was exhibited in London. Mr. Laurie of Canala, a man born in France of English parents, was a pioneer, and since his day this industry has stimulated the settlement of east and west coast river flats between mountains and sea. Many fruit trees were introduced from Réunion, mangoes, custard apples, corossal, coeur de boeuf, oranges, mandarines, etc., M. de Greslan planting them on his farm in the Dumbea valley. He was also the country's first photographer, and that prior to 1860, so that the subjects for his camera were wilder than anything to be met with nowadays.

The colony's first sugar mill belonged to Numa and Ferdinand Joubert, who received a grant of 1,250 acres at Dumbea on their milling a first harvest of 170,000 lbs. Numa later went to Sydney, where he ran boats on the Lane Cove River to Hunter's Hill.

The colony first bush postman was a naked savage who used to carry letters to settlers slung over his shoulder in a tin box. Unfortunately the tribes through which he passed blamed the white man's magic box for an epidemic which carried off many among them. So they waylaid and murdered him. This was at Daoué in 1860. Thus the postal service in this district was interrupted for a couple of years.

CHAPTER X.

AN ARMED CAMP

FOR the first years of its existence, Noumea was an armed camp rather than a township, the handful of inhabitants living in a constant state of alert.

In April, 1856, Pierre Expert, who lived alone in a straw hut in what to-day is the Vallée des Colons suburb, just the other side of Signal Hill, was robbed of six thousand francs, mostly in gold ounces, which he kept in a box. After this, as there were no banking facilities, the Treasury allowed settlers to deposit their money in the state vaults, where they could get it again on demand.

The natives who had robbed Expert had no idea of the value of money, a copper penny seeming better than a gold ounce to them. So when they began tendering the stolen gold for clay pipes and sticks of tobacco the storekeepers warned the authorities. It was found that they were from the village of a chief named Nundo, where the greater part of the booty was still intact.

The tribesmen were told they would be punished if they did not return with the gold, but the townspeople waited for them in vain, and at length the garrison commander, Major Testard, decided to go after Nundo. Nobody knew just where his village was, for the country in the immediate vicinity of Noumea still awaited exploration. Apart from a few duck-shooting officers and pigeon hunters even Magenta beach three miles out (to-day Noumea's racecourse) and the Dumbea River eight miles away were unvisited.

The Major took with him an artillery lieutenant named Rigaux, the colonisation agent Conneau, and a score of soldiers. They used the Pont-des-Francais track which to-day's high road follows out of the Noumea peninsula, and were told that Nundo lived up in the hills on the other side of the Dumbea, but returned without finding him.

A second expedition had better success. After crossing the river—known to-day to every New Zealander and American who visits the island—they climbed a steep hillside which they nicknamed Jacob's Ladder and came across a native they knew, and whom the artillerymen had named Boumaza after an Arab rebel then in the news. This boy showed them the track to Nundo's village, which proved to be the usual collection of beehive huts. (Later it was the scene of a native drama when Nundo killed his grand chief Kuindo, enemy of the French.)

The natives took to the hill above the ravine, whence they showered the Frenchmen with stones. Mr. Conneau advanced with his native servant, a boy named Sam whom Kuindo had given him and who understood a little English. Sam persuaded Nundo to parley, and he came down with one or two of his naked warriors. Ordered to give up the gold, he asked for time to consult his tribe, and half an hour later returned with most of it, saying that the remainder was in possession of absent natives, but that he would send it in on their return. On this understanding the expedition returned home. The absent natives, true to Nundo's promise, turned up subsequently with their part of the loot.

The same year four colonists, including the Expert already spoken of, were massacred. Blocks of land in the Vallée des Colons had been granted to three soldiers, Pierre Strube, Bisteille, and Alex Garre alias Murvaux. These were men of the 33rd Company Marine Infantry who had just finished their garrison service and elected to stay in the colony. One of them had been employed at an officers' pension known as the "Three Sparrows," one was batman to Petitjean Roget the registrar, and the third was a hospital attendant.

Towards the end of October they withdrew the 1,600 francs they had jointly saved from the Treasury and bought a straw-thatched house and property from M. Guy, who with his wife moved into town to await the boat for Australia. The soldiers had their titles confirmed by Major Testard, who added to their purchase the twelve acres each of them was entitled to as army grant on completion of their service. The three spent a merry evening with wine, women and song, and at about 1.30 in the morning hit the trail for their new homestead, three-quarters of an hour away. It was a fine moonlight night and they linked arms, blithely confident in what the future had in store.

They did not know that those implacable enemies of the French, Kandio and Jack Angara with their tayos, were on the warpath, while a still larger party under Kuindo was hidden behind Signal Hill waiting to attack the town, bent on exterminating the whites. They missed Expert's dying cries, as the savages broke into his house on the Rue d'Aventure, leading to La Conception mission, and cleft him between the shoulders, while another axe-blow almost lopped off a hand.

The Gay homestead was a few hundred yards away. The blacks silently surrounded it and two of their number stole up and knocked on the door. There was no reply.

Just as they were going away they heard the soldiers approaching, so they hid in the bushes again and as the whites came abreast rushed out and murdered them.

There was another house a mile away, that of Jean Vergès, who spoke English and was known to his friends as "John." It is believed the natives may have spared his life thinking him to be an Englishman. In any case Vergès was roused by the firing of the houses of the murdered settlers, and no attempt was made to attack him.

Guessing what had taken place, he saddled his horse and galloped into Port-de-France, giving the alarm. A patrol of a dozen men was sent out and disturbed Kuindo's band preparing to attack the town, who retreated bushwards yelling defiance. Strube's body was the first found, then Bisteille, lying only a few yards from the house, and then Garre at the foot of a hill sixty yards further on. At Expert's house they found a French sailor who had left the navy to become cook to Mr. Vergès trying to help the wounded man. But it was too late; Expert died a few days later in the town hospital, without ever regaining consciousness. A cart was requisitioned to carry him and the murdered bodies back.

Port-de-France was now in a state of siege, and punitive expeditions were sent out up to May, 1858, burning native huts and villages and destroying plantations and exterminating the marauding bands led by Kandio, Angara and others. Land belonging to hostile natives was expropriated all round Noumea and made available to colonists. Major Testard directed the eighteen months' hostilities, and, in spite of alarms during the great kanak revolt of 1878-79, never again was the immediate vicinity of Noumea troubled by organised insurrection, the scene of massacre and looting having shifted after 1859 to other parts of the colony.

Kuindo's projected attack on 3rd November failed and it was only learned afterwards how near the township came to extermination. He had given orders to his tayos to wipe out all the white men in Port-de-France; they were not to fire the houses nor kill the white women, for his ambition was to make of the former his chief village and of the latter his personal slaves.

The town's entire garrison consisted of thirteen men of the 6th Artillery Company, one hunded and fourteen of the 2nd Infantry (another twenty-two were at Balade, hundreds of miles northward), and there were seven officers and sixteen colonists enrolled in the militia, making a total of one hundred and fifty men, of whom twenty-one were at

(Air photo. by Médard, Noumea.)

Modern Noumea's central section, showing Treasury (foreground), Government House (centre) and Signal Hill (centre rear), where cannibals murdered the sentry in 1857. Behind, barren hills from which natives used to raid the infant town.

(Photo. Médard, Noumea.)

Amédée lighthouse, sent out in sections from Paris in 1862, guides shipping entering Noumea waters through the outer barrier reef. To-day the lighthouse is familiar to thousands of Allied sailors and soldiers who have passed into the South Pacific zone from Australia, America and New Zealand.

La Conception a few miles out. Everybody mounted guard turn and turn about, and when an expedition of seventy or eighty men left there remained only about forty to guard the town, round which roamed two or three thousand hostile tayos. Often there were small men-o'-war like the "Bayonnaise" in the harbour, but the native mind ignored these, believing that once the whites ashore were exterminated no others would come to take their land away from them.

Their tactics, as we have seen, was to prowl round the town boundary setting fire to stray houses and cutting off isolated men. One night they crept into Paddon's mainland store on the docks alongside the mound—which convicts later levelled—known as the Butte Conneau. This landmark, seen in old paintings of the port, was named after the pilot and immigration official who was a brother of Napoleon III's private doctor. A naval guardroom was only six yards away, but the natives cut a hole in the side of the store and entered unperceived. They stole a lot of goods, more in fact than they could carry away, for some they abandoned in a nearby swamp.

Towards the end of 1857 an attempt was made to surprise Port-de-France in the day-time. A guard at a spot called the Ambuscade had just been relieved, leaving a corporal and four men sitting on a bench talking to M. Mouet, the armourer. They had left their arms in the guardhouse. A group of blacks, who were at first believed to be mission natives from La Conception, were seen approaching, but they aroused no suspicion until only forty yards away, when the soldiers rushed inside to get their arms. In his haste the corporal seized one of the private's rifles, and the latter had to satisfy himself with a stick.

Three shots were fired at a young native brandishing an axe who seemed to be the leader, but all missed, and the tayo rushed at Corporal Maury, who parried with his rifle butt, stretching him on the ground. A soldier put his gun on the native's chest and pulled the trigger, but it failed to go off. The black picked himself up and moved off, followed by the soldier with the stick who knocked him into a ditch where he was rescued by the other natives. Then all made off.

At a spot called Brickmaker's Hill under Signal Hill, two hundred yards away (about where the troop commander's stables stand to-day in Rue Vauban) was another guard of fifteen sailors, but the fleeing natives passed across their front so quickly they had no time to fire. Some banana trees were afterwards found cut down in the soldiers' garden, situated at the top of what now is the

Place des Cocotiers, Noumea's great central square.

Major Testard decided on an expedition against the wild Touaourou tribe whose stronghold was at Ounia on the opposite coast, leaving Mr. Fouché in charge at Port-de-France. He took about seventy soldiers and sailors and six native guides and marched to Mont Dore, whence he was to proceed overland across the difficult and broken ironstone plateau then unexplored, but to-day known as the Plaine des Lacs.

They spent the first night at La Conception, a patrol of six under Corporal Maury going ahead to reconnoitre. In this patrol were two old soldiers, François Charpy and Auguste Bourdais, who had seen service in Africa, the former in a regiment of Zouaves. Disobeying instructions given them at their halting place, these two, followed by two other soldiers and a couple of natives, climbed to a hut overlooking the St. Louis plain.

Entrance to the hut was on the side opposite their approach, but as they passed round the door was suddenly thrown open and out rushed a score of native warriors. Charpy and Bourdais fired but missed, and were borne down, one with a spear through his neck and the other by an axe-blow. The other soldiers ran without stopping to fire. One of them named Charpentier took the wrong direction and threw away his rifle, but was saved by a mission native who picked it up and re-directed him. This soldier was accidentally killed by one of his mates in an affray a few months later.

Next morning, 20th October, 1856, the expedition passing the La Coulée River, found the bodies of Charpy and Bourdais hanging from the trees, minus arms and legs which had been sent as trophies among the tribes. Their remains were decently buried and their comrades swore revenge. That day they passed through M. Bérard's property on Mont Dore. Here the following January the owner and a dozen or more white colonists were to be treacherously massacred.

The next day and the day following forced marches took them across rivers and swamps on to the plateau, two of whose characteristic lakes were discovered. Then, rations exhausted, they descended the bush-clad mountains to the south-east coast. Here two columns were formed, one consisting of the least footsore men being pushed on to attack the village at the Mamié River mouth, while Captain Arnaud's weary column brought up the rear.

The Touaourous took possession of a wooded height commanding a defile through which they must pass and

showered them with spears and stones. Many soldiers were hit but found it impossible to fire back. Relief came with the arrival of the second column, which surprised a party of two hundreds tayos climbing the hill to reinforce the attack. Captain Arnaud ordered their pursuit and this caused the hilltop natives to abandon their position.

The whites found the native village deserted and bare of food. While they were burning huts and canoes a native managed to creep up close and fire a shot which passed between two officers, nearly wounding an ensign of the "Bayonnaise." It was learnt that about thirty natives had been killed in the defile affray. But the story of the outing is more worth recording because of its crossing of the Plaine des Lacs, where no white men had hitherto set foot. The expedition returned to Noumea by schooner from Yaté, about fourteen miles further down the coastal strip.

At a pilou which the Touaourous held to celebrate peace with the French a chief appeared in Charpy's blood-stained tunic, but chief Kuindo told him the quicker he got out of it the better, so he tore it off and went on with the dance as naked as the rest of his companions.

During his absence Major Testard had given instructions that nobody was to leave the town boundary, but a man named Alexis Regdet ignored the order. His disappearance was reported by his employer, Victor Cuinier, keeper of the "Maison Rouge" restaurant in the Rue Sebastopol, who said Regdet had gone out to look for vegetables, taking his revolver and a double-barrelled gun with him. Mr. Conneau headed a search party of soldiers and friendly natives and they noticed two dogs near the site of Expert's former hut in the Route de l'Aventure. The dogs were recognised as belonging to Cuinier and the other to the port surgeon. Nearby was found Regdet's axe-scarred body, and beside him a bag of vegetables from Expert's garden.

From friendly Ile Ouen natives, who landed in a canoe at Desnoyers Bay, it was learned that a war party of Yahoué tayos had boasted of killing a white man, but their petty chief had been wounded. One of the murderers afterwards recounted how this chief, named Gambouarou, had hidden in the niaouli trees waiting to ambush Regdet, whom they had previously noticed looking for vegetables. The dogs had barked and Regdet had fired twice at the chief, but his third shot had misfired and he was quickly surrounded and killed.

This Gambouarou understood white ways and was a thorn in the side of the Europeans. He had in 1855 been

chosen as police auxiliary by Tardy de Montravel, occupying himself particularly with the natives who used to come to town. But he quickly earned himself a bad name. In 1856 he had entered the house of a government employee and attacked his wife, an Englishwoman, for which he had done a year's imprisonment. He had sworn revenge. Now a price was put on his head, but he escaped to the other side of St. Vincent where chief Watton refused to give him up. After peace was signed he came in closer, to Paita, thinking all would be forgiven and forgotten, as a precaution even changing his name. As it happened he was not caught and he did go unpunished.

These few stories may help to give some idea of what life was like in the first two or three years of New Caledonia's existence as a colony. But far more terrible and exciting incidents were to happen in the years to come.

Chapter XI.

THE MONT DORE MASSACRE

WE now come to a massacre which stirred the colony to more drastic action, that on Mont Dore on 19th January, 1857, for an account of which I will draw on the contemporary account left by M. Fouché.

The natives, cheated of their tribal lands and in a state bordering on insurrection had unwillingly seen M. Bérard and his group of colonists settle at Morari. Without actually molesting them, they spread it around that if they did not go away Kuindo would make things hot for them. Frightened by these threats, some of the whites working for the firm of Vial d'Aram and Co. asked to return to Port-de-France. It was to give them confidence that Mr. Bérard, their leader, himself went to live at Mont Dore. He believed he could make friends of Kuindo's allies Jack Angar and Kandio, who lived nearby, the latter's village situated in a depression just before the Mont Dore waterfall. Not far away was another petty chief named Maké.

Forty or fifty natives from these villages used to come along daily and work for the settlement, but they were only biding their time. Angara, however, insisted that no massacre should take place while a certain Mr. Magastre, one of three brothers, was there; it seems he wanted his life spared because he was living with a native woman, a near relative of this chief. Not knowing what was afoot, the white man was surprised when Angara urged him to go to town.

Port-de-France was already suffering from nerves. On New Year's Day officers and leading citizens (M. Bérard included), celebrating on board the "Bayonnaise," were gathered round Le Bris, naval commander in New Caledonian waters—the man after whom a bay near Huailu is named. This officer had just raised his champagne glass to drink to the colony's future prosperity when they were alarmed by what sounded like a shot from the Mont Dore cannon. The party went ashore and from the top of Signal Hill could see a fire blazing at Morari.

Mr. Bérard and two companions set off in a leaky boat to find out what was the matter; and were relieved to discover it had been caused by a drunken white letting off his gun. This had somehow set fire to the straw hut in which they were celebrating, which in turn had exploded a keg of gunpowder, destroying various stores. The incident serves to show the prevailing feeling of insecurity.

Had Mr. Bérard any presentiment of what was about to happen? It looks as if he had, for he refused to let his wife and daughter remain at Mont Dore and booked passages for them on Paddon's "Martha" schooner, which left for Sydney a few days before the massacre. The day prior to their departure a fete was held on board, fireworks and crackers being let off.

The Mont Dore colonists were always armed and watchful, and did not stray far from the settlement. But the natives were more cunning than they. They moved freely about among the whites, helping them with their building and cultivation, lulling them into a false sense of security. So the day came when two boats pulled hurriedly into port to say they had heard the sound of firing and seen large bodies of excited tayos on Morari beach.

The news was as bad as could be. At a pre-arranged signal the tayos had fallen on and killed all the eighteen white colonists as well as fifteen of their Sandwich Island labourers from the New Hebrides. The signal for the attack was the shooting of Mr. Bérard by his old native servant Bénoist, who a year or two before had already fired his master's house in the Quartier Latin. Bérard had his back turned; he was in the act of yoking oxen to a plough when he was wounded in the neck at such close quarters that his skin was blackened with gunpowder. He fell, but picking himself up, put one hand to his neck to stop the flow of blood while trying to get at his pistol with the other. An axe-blow finished him off. Two other whites were putting sheet-iron on the roof of the principal building, and they formed an easy target for kanak spears.

Among those massacred were Messrs. Bérard, A. Magastre, Germain Magastre, Nicholas Quère, Seneschal, Alain Marie, Jean Michel Tare (a carpenter), Alphonse Laurent (an upholsterer), and Louis Caren and his fourteen-year-old son. The blacks celebrated with a pilou, after firing the huts from which they had salvaged a considerable amount of booty. A number of New Hebridean workmen managed to escape by running into the bush, and a mission native also escaped to La Conception to give the alarm.

The third of the Magastre brothers, unaware of the disaster, arrived by boat from Port-de-France with two other whites and noticed the fires. It was low tide and they could not pull right up to the beach, but a native waded out and told them it was quite all right to land, for the fires were accidental and all the whites were safe. Fortunately they paid no attention to him, scenting tragedy. The treacherous native who tried to lure them ashore was

afterwards caught and shot. Mr. Magastre himself recognised him when he arrived in town with a canoe-load of Ile Ouen blacks, thinking to spy on the whites. He met his end stoically, maintaining it was a case of mistaken identity, and refused to talk.

It seems that petty chief Maké was not an accomplice in the murders to the same extent as the other chiefs. If he was in it at all it was by compulsion. His father, Aliki-Kari, had been killed and eaten by Jack Angara the preceding November, in revenge for having sold the Mont Dore land to Mr. Bérard. He had been the first and easiest victim of tribal anger. They turned on him because he had accepted presents from the whites, and the fact that he was a wrinkled ancient with a white beard did not save him from the cooking pot.

A party under Captain Gent investigated this old man's death. They found nothing but the skin of his feet, together with the bones of a woman who had been eaten at the same time. Aliki-Kari's demise was the result of a purely native quarrel—or so Angara pretended.

Mr. Bérard had also led a party to investigate the old chief's disappearance, but without notifying the authorities, which was against the rules, and near Kandio's village they had had an uncomfortable encounter with a band of 50 tayos who barred their route.

Maké, an intelligent and partly civilised young man, had made several trips to Sydney on Paddon's vessels. He spoke good English and was rather a favourite with Mr. Bérard, who fed him daily at his table. But he was in an awkward position, being too weak with only 30 tayos under him to revenge his father's death, and so at the mercy of Jack Angara. Knowing of the plot, he told Mr. Bérard that he was leaving for Ile Ouen, and did in fact clear out with some of his warriors the night before the massacre.

Port-de-France was stunned by the ghastly tragedy. Major Testard decided the danger was too imminent to send his soldiers off on a punitive raid, but boats from the "Bayonnaise" visited the scene of the disaster to find the natives had decamped. They buried thirteen whites, none of whom had been mutilated except Mr. Bérard, whose viscera had been opened and the entrails, without being detached, placed on a plate.

The natives were jubilant at their success and their spoils, which included a score of guns. They were gorging themselves on what meat they could shoot, for the Bérard cattle were now running wild. The surviving Magastre paid another visit to see if he could salvage anything from

the ruined settlement, but found the thirteen corpses buried by the "Bayonnaise" had been dug up and left exposed on the beach. Suddenly he was attacked by natives from a curtain of mangrove trees, but nobody was wounded except a Sandwich Islander as the kanaks' guns were grossly overcharged.

One or two more chapters of this book will tell of the merciless pursuit of Kandio, Jack Angara and their tayos, and of what they went through in the twenty months before the former was brought to justice. A thousand francs reward was offered for the capture of each of the chiefs, who first took refuge with the Touaourous of the south, and then in the district under Kuindo's rule. Tribes were warned that if they sheltered them they, too, would be outlawed. So gradually their bands disintegrated through discouragement and hunger.

The end may here be told. Reduced to twenty followers, in such a desperate condition that they were forced to live on magnara (a vine) and wild roots, Kandio and Jack Angara and Bénoist, Mr. Bérard's killer, were caught by neutral chief Watton, head of the Titemas of St. Vincent Bay. They were bound, their hands tied behind their backs, and Watton started to lead them in to Port-de-France to claim his "moni." But during the night Bénoist managed to bite through the cords that bound Angara, and the latter made his getaway.

The rest were delivered to the French. They showed no fear at their trial, thinking that like others before them they would be exiled to Tahiti. It was an illusion. On 28th August, 1859, their eyes were bandaged and they faced a firing squad on the little stretch of beach below Fort Constantine, named after de Montravel's ship. Noumea hospital to-day occupies the site where the fort once stood.

Watton received his blood "moni." He was amorous of a young widow, an Englishwoman at whose bar he used to drink when he came to Port-de-France. A town joker told him he had only to present himself with his francs and the lady would consent to be his. He took along his bag of gold, dumped it on the bar, and offered himself to the lady with an ingratiating smile, but she laughed in his face and he went away crestfallen.

In addition to his "moni," the Paris government rewarded Watton, through the Minister for the Navy, with a special gold medal and full dress uniform which he used to wear on important occasions. These arrived in 1862. But the whites despised Watton for having sold his country-

men, and he died an unhappy man, saddened at seeing the land of his fathers divided up among Europeans, who began to fill the St. Vincent and Paita plains with houses, plantations and herds of cattle. To increase his sorrows his favourite son Matamoé, "the pride of his race," died.

In accordance with ancient custom—one that has existed among many primitive peoples—two of Matamoé's wives were strangled to accompany their lord to the never-never. The governor sent gendarmes along to investigate this happening, but they were put off with the story that the women had committed hari-kari from grief. Nevertheless, says Garnier, this visit had a beneficial effect. Watton, when his own end approached, expressed the desire that none of his wives should follow him into the tomb.

One of Watton's last acts, in October, 1866, was to help save a party of six Frenchman from drowning when their boat capsized. He died the following year, a dried-up old man with a wrinkled face like parchment. The moment he breathed his last the whole village resounded with howls of distress which spread throughout his territories, even kanaks working in isolated plantations or hunting and fishing taking up the threnody. From all parts warriors came in to render final homage to their chief. For years after the chosen mourners would be forbidden to cut either beard or hair.

Watton's body was clad in his gay French uniform with the gold medal pinned to his breast, and beside him lay his favourite gun, ammunition and a supply of food. The whole tribe filed past his mortal remains. Towards evening his corpse was placed on a litter of interwoven branches and borne through his territory; then deposited at the foot of a giant banyan tree alongside the bones of his ancestors and of Matamoé, his son. Food and funeral offerings were left, a piece of calico by one tayo, sugar-cane by another, a huge pile of yams, a fine spear, a green-stone tomahawk quarried from Ile Ouen.

The chief of Paita, Kuindo's son, pronounced a speech over the body, telling of Watton's prowess, courage and wisdom. This speech was frequently interrupted by yells of approval. Watton, it is estimated, was 50 years old when he died, but probably thought he was much older. For natives believed then that they generally lived longer than the whites, though statistics prove the opposite. Actually most of them were quite ignorant of their own age, which was a difficult matter for a European to estimate.

Jack Angara had a long run for his money, for he was not captured until some time after Watton's death. After escaping from Watton's men, he had killed a native woman whom he suspected of having betrayed him. It was an old chief of Paita, Kuindo's uncle, who eventually handed him over to the authorities and collected his 1,000 francs. Brought into town Angara, like those shot earlier, freely admitted his part in the Mont Dore massacre, and stoically met the same fate.

A year or two earlier Garnier had come across Angara in the neighbourhood of Paita and had shown him a photograph of his ally Kuindo's head which, preserved in alcohol, had been sent for exhibition to the Brest Museum. Angara immediately recognised the picture and exclaimed, "Ah, Kandio!" Then remembering he was speaking to a white, he regained his composure and added: "Kandio non lélé (no good), he much deceived Oui-Ouis." With that he went away and sat down pensively under a coconut tree. Hours later he was still there, thinking maybe that one day his skull, too, might adorn a French museum.

Hounded like the others from pillar to post, the third Mont Dore chief, Maké, was allowed finally to return to his village. But there was a tense moment one day when a boat-load of "Bayonnaise" sailors, capsized near the waterfall, came across him and the twenty tayos who were left with him. He cried out to the sailors, "Tayo, Tayo" ("Friends, Friends"), but they did not understand and prepared to shoot their way along the track to La Conception. Maké, however, persisted in his friendly gestures, offering sweet potatoes which were finally accepted. To show their goodwill, his men then salvaged the sunken boat, placing it under a taboo so that no other natives would touch it or its contents.

Maké's pardon, afterwards confirmed, obliged him to live on Domboué islet and he was not allowed to cultivate on Mont Dore. On only one occasion did he ever venture into Port-de-France, for the soldiers there had threatened to kill him. He died some years later from the privations he had undergone and from some syphilitic malady.

Mr. Carlo Leoni, Netherlands Consul in Noumea, who owns the Red House property near the beach at Plum (on Mr. Bérard's projected settlement) has a small museum of guns, bayonets, and native weapons and skulls dating from the days when it was war to the knife between French and native in the region surrounding Noumea.

CHAPTER XII.

PADDON SAVES THE TOWN

IT was just as well that Major Testard kept his troops in Port-de-France. Grand chief Kuindo, paramount chief of the south, had bigger plans afoot which he hoped to bring to a successful conclusion almost simultaneously with the Mont Dore massacre which he had inspired. This cunning and intelligent savage had a thousand tayos at his disposal, not counting those of Kandio and Angara, his allies. He reckoned on the French immediately sending out a strong punitive expedition, which would leave the town with few defenders, giving him the chance to wipe out his enemies with one sensational blow.

To this end he made his dispositions. One party of four hundred warriors was to cross over to Ile Nou from Ducos Peninsula, great barren neck of land which forms one side of Noumea harbour and which to-day houses the island's leper station—it was once a camp for political deportees. They were to wait on Ile Nou for the signal to paddle over and make a night assault on the township from the harbour side. At the same time Kuindo's second and more numerous party, gathering in the hidden valleys of Noumea peninsula, was to storm the town from the land side. In these circumstances, only the foresight and initiative of Captain Paddon saved Noumea from extinction.

The mobilisation of Kuindo's forces was skilfully carried out. Three days before the Mont Dore massacre the tayos started filing through the niaouli scrub into positions of attack. They moved at night and hid up during the day, so that neither land nor sea movements were observed by the Signal Hill lookouts. The canoe party, coming from Paita way, where the grand chief had his headquarters, were hidden in the scrub at the extremity of Ducos, from which they were ferried over in the darkness to Ile Nou.

These natives believed they could allay Paddon's suspicions by pretending they had come on a peaceful visit. The English trader knew their chief well, employed many local natives in his enterprises, and was liked and respected by them all. In their current hatred for the Oui-Ouis they had sworn to have trading relations only with Paddon and the English, so that he did business with them on a large scale. But he was a hard man to bluff, and seeing so many tayos arriving he took his precautions. One of these pre-

cautions was to refuse to sell Kuindo any more arms and ammunition. Here Kuindo made a capital blunder; he threatened to burn down the establishment if the Englishman would not sell to him.

The result was that Paddon redoubled his precautions and his watchfulness. He posted watchers all round the island who reported fresh arrivals. Unknown to the natives he made a trip over to Port-de-France and had a talk with the troop commander, giving his reasons for thinking that the natives were premeditating a grand scale attack, and that the town and every white in it were threatened with destruction.

Between them the two keenest brains in the community concerted measures to stave off disaster. About two hours after midnight on the morning of the Mont Dore affair a whaleboat from the "Bayonnaise," instructed to halt any canoes making for Ile Nou from the mouth of the Dumbea, spotted a fire burning on Freycinet or Round Island. This islet, lying at the entrance to the inner harbour between Ducos and Ile Nou, later became Noumea's quarantine station; in the present war it has served as an internment camp for a few Frenchmen pronouncedly hostile to the Free French government. In Paddon's day it was uninhabited and scrub-covered.

The boat had way on and quietly ran in close enough to pick out a score of kanaks silhouetted round the blaze. These were not at first alarmed, thinking it to be one of Paddon's boats, but as she slipped into the firelight they were quick to realise their mistake and, dousing the fire, disappeared as if by magic. Not a shot was fired, but to prevent their escape the sailors took possession of their canoe. An hour or two before dawn, however, catcalls from the nearest point of Ile Nou told that the tayos had safely swum across the shark-infested channel. The kanak is a silent swimmer, slow but sure, and hard to pick up in the water on a dark night.

Later, when Kuindo had deserted his allies and submitted, he revealed that he had been with the Round Island party, superintending plans for the projected attack. He had been thoroughly alarmed on recognising the boat, but was not among those who had swum to Ile Nou. Instead he had returned to the mainland to supervise the land attack.

There was great activity in the township as the sun rose on 19th January, for every available man, including sailors from the ships, was hurriedly marshalled for a great

battue or search of Ile Nou. Fortunately the mainland natives did not get wind of what was afoot, or were still unprepared for attack.

About the only men left behind were the hydrographical engineer, M. Bouquet de la Grye, M. Fouche, a non-commissioned engineer named Astrie and four others. They climbed Signal Hill after lunch to watch the battue through de la Grye's telescope. In the other direction, eastwards towards Mont Dore, all looked peaceful, for the settlement was not yet burning although the whites there had already been slaughtered. There was nothing unusual about the crowd of natives they thought they saw on Morari beach.

Westward, barely a mile away, the search was already afoot among the hills and dales surrounding Paddon's establishment, but the undergrowth prevented them from seeing much. All the same plenty was going on; the round up score being well over a hundred natives, nearly half of them armed and in black war-paint. A few attempted resistance, though no whites were wounded.

The haul was nothing like complete. Conneau, one of those in charge, had agreed to cruise between the south of Ile Nou and the steep and tiny Ile aux Lapins to watch out for escapees, but had disregarded his instructions and gone ashore for a talk with his friend Paddon. Sam, his native boy, discovered his own father, a member of Kuindo's tribe, among the captives and pleaded for his release on the score that he was unarmed and only there to buy stores. The upshot was that Mr. Conneau humanely suggested that the unarmed tayos be released, and this was agreed to.

It was proposed that the fifty or sixty armed captives who had offered no resistance should be interned under guard on the pontoon "Moselle," which gives its name to the Baie de la Moselle, the large stretch of water between the port and the Artillery Peninsula, nowadays the anchorage for a fleet of fishing smacks and launches. Boatloads of prisoners were about to push off when a change was made in this arrangement. As a lesson in white man's justice it was decided to take all instead to the Bay of Gadgi, near Paita, to witness the shooting of the three among them who had attempted to put up a fight. These three were petty chiefs; they were liquidated by a firing squad, and then the remainder were allowed to go free.

It was their lucky day, for next morning Port-de-France had definite information of the Mont Dore massacre and white blood called loudly for vengeance. Had the captured natives been placed aboard the "Moselle" they would undoubtedly all have been taken ashore and shot.

Kuindo had left his main attack too late. Port-de-France was roused as it had never been roused before. There were comings and goings from Major Testard's office, enraged and determined men were posted at all vantage points, and vigilance increased tenfold. Kuindo waited and waited, then thought better of it, and in the end his mainland force dispersed without striking a blow.

During the months that followed vigilance relaxed somewhat and some strange things occurred. One of them was the incident which a modern crime writer would undoubtedly call "Death on Signal Hill." This 300-feet high hill dominates the port; from its summit magnificent views are obtained, in one direction across the harbour and away out to the great barrier reef, in others over the mountains of the Chaine Centrale and across Morari Bay to the exquisite outline of Mont Dore. Here is a landscape of glowing colours and ever-changing cloud effects.

Ever since the first days of occupation there has been a mast on Signal Hill so that those below may know when ships are entering or leaving the harbour. A small hut was built there for the lookout man, and a sailor kept ever on duty. To-day the cabin has been replaced by a more imposing building built with bricks imported from Australia.

The hill is steepish, covered with scattered scrub, and rather bare on top—the sort of slopes that goats love to haunt. In the ordinary way nobody could approach the shack without being observed. But across a saddle, where the town reservoir now stands, and distant maybe two hundred and fifty yards, rises another tiny peak surrounded by a grove of casuarina trees hanging like a drop curtain in a theatre landscape. This grove is still there.

About 11 a.m. on 5th February, 1857, a sailor whose time it was to go on watch, climbed slowly up the path to the semaphore post, where his comrade would be waiting to be relieved. A few minutes later he came dashing downhill shouting the alarm. The townsfolk got up from their lunch-time siesta and listened to his story. Up above there, he told them, in the signal shack, he had found the man he was to relieve, a sailor named Louis Bonneau, lying dead from a hideous axe-blow, and otherwise mutilated. His murderers had cut off and decamped with one of his arms and with the station telescope.

Later it was found that the crime had been committed by three natives, two of them in the employ of garrison officers, and therefore well acquainted with the habits of the townsfolk. They knew that the luncheon hour was the

ideal time for a murder, and that it was the lookout's practice in the early months of the year, when the sun got blazing hot, to retire into the shack to wait for his relief.

The details came out some months later when Boomaza, one of the natives implicated, was captured. He was known to have taken refuge on Ile Nou, and eventually was arrested and brought to town, where there was some talk of shooting him. His tale was that he had taken cover behind some rocks to give warning of anybody's approach, while the other two had gone forward, starting from the concealment of the casuarina grove. On account of his youth and because he was not the actual murderer, his life was spared and he was exiled to Tahiti. Some years later, his period of exile over, he returned to New Caledonia.

The real assassin was Bénoist, Mr. Bérard's murderer and Angara's lieutenant. He was even then showing Bonneau's arm among the tribes, boasting how easy white men were to kill, and goading the natives to attack. The third native was a mere lad employed by Captain Arnaud, who had joined the others because he coveted the telescope, which the French later on recovered from the village of Ningari.

The twenty or thirty Sandwich Islanders who had escaped the Mont Dore massacre had now been brought from Conception to Port-de-France, where they were lodged in a large straw hut two hundreds yards from the guardroom known as the Brickworks. These Hebrideans were not of warlike stock and were scared to death by their experiences. At the least extraneous noise they would throw themselves face-down, dithery with fear. Though given axes for self-defence, they would have been incapable of confronting an attacker, and a single Caledonian tayo might have gone among them and slaughtered them all without resistance.

So we come to a night of torrential rain such as Noumea experiences sometimes in summer time. It was impossible to see a foot ahead in the sodden uneven streets, nor could ordinary noises be distinguished. Neither wind nor rain, however, could completely drown the racket that suddenly rose from the Hebridean camp. "The blacks are on us," some inhabitants thought, hastily barricading their houses; while others struggled in alarm towards the Brickworks. There were footsteps and yells, and the guard opened fire.

Then the "cease fire" sounded and the town, finding what had happened, went grumpily back to bed. The Sandwich men, hearing a noise outside their hut which they said was that of spears rattling, thought a party of

Caledonian natives was about to attack them, and had run howling out into the night. They did not stop till they got to the guardhouse, where the soldiers had opened fire, wounding one of them, fortunately only slightly. As a result the major forbade indiscriminate firing in future; he ordered the inhabitants to stay at home and prepare to defend themselves if an alert sounded; at the same time he organised a patrol which was to be ready to hasten to any quarter threatened.

It had been a bogus alarm and the night ended on a note of comedy. A search party went along to find out what had caused the excitement and came upon a large black billy goat which had taken refuge from the storm in the Sandwich men's camp. There it was now, contentedly munching scraps of straw, not in the least worried by all the trouble it was responsible for. And the worst its frightened victims could say of it was that it had given one of them a parting butt in the rump on his hurried dash to the guardhouse.

Chapter XIII.

ON THE WAR PATH

ONCE, around Noumea, the Dumbea, Paita, St. Vincent, Mont Dore, native villages were plentiful, but to-day, save for the two missions, there is hardly one left. They were all destroyed by the expeditions sent out against Kuindo and his allies.

Seldom did such expeditions take the natives by surprise, even when they purposely set out at night time, for watchmen on the heights around lit fires as soon as the soldiers were seen. Often it was found preferable to send raiding parties off by boat to the Dumbea, Gadgi, or Port Laguerre on the Paita River.

Most expeditions lasted from three to five days. The policy of burning villages and destroying plantations, later to be ruthlessly followed during the great kanak insurrection of 1878, eventually had a demoralising effect, homeless, starving blacks being forced to come in and sue for peace.

It was a guerilla kind of warfare. Now and again showers of spears and stones flung by invisible hands would come hurtling out of some ambush, but the throwers rarely exposed themselves. They would sink into the grass and bushes, sometimes laughing loudly at the ineffectiveness of the white man's fire. These ambushes were mostly experienced in bush-clad valleys, so it was generally found best to follow the ridges.

A typical expedition was that in December, 1856, when seventy men were landed at Paita Bay and set out to destroy the fertile plantations of the valleys watered by the Karikouié, Katiramanou and other creeks. From devastated Kakendou village they were led by Mr. Conneau's boy Sam to his native village of Monotoupié. Though surrounded at daybreak, the tayos managed to get away, only a few women and children being taken prisoner.

The fugitives were fired on, and the party was shocked to come on two women who had fallen victim to their fire. To the body of one a child of about five years old was clinging. This child was deformed; the soldiers took charge of him and nicknamed him Bosco (Hunchback). In town he was put to school with other wards of Major Testard. They were taught French by an infantry sergeant, the object being to make interpreters of them. Bosco made rapid progress, but was carried off by an epidemic in 1860 together with the rest.

At Monotoupié Sam had given the alarm, but he excused himself by saying he wanted to give his father time to escape—a very natural thing to do. At Ningoré, the next village, the kanaks employed a ruse to save their huts from being burnt. They fired the grass and bush on the side by which the French were coming, forming a smoke-screen difficult to cross. The soldiers, however, kept right on and soon the village added its smoke to the rest of the conflagration.

That night the party bivouacked on a hill above the circle of fire, across which, on a barren slope a thousand yards off, they could see a Dantesque spectacle—about fifteen hundred natives moving about like naked demons, lit up by the flames.

In all a dozen villages were destroyed, including tiny Toniambelé, hidden away in a picturesque valley and inhabited by Kuindo's wives and young girls, daughters of his subjects, who were his property as grand chief. It was he who disposed of them in marriage, until which day they were compelled to work in his plantations. It was desirable to own as many as possible, for the greater the number of these beasts of burden working for him, the greater the chief and the richer the yam harvest.

The following month a second expedition destroyed another string of villages. They set out from Ouaoué, a village belonging to Watton near Port Laguerre. Watton was always ready to help the French, for he was hostile to Kuindo without being actually at war with him. The chief of Ouaoué and his tayos were therefore allowed to join the expedition, which split into three columns, two on opposite ridges flanking the middle one on lower ground. A group of fifty tayos watching the valley column was caught napping by one of the ridge columns and six of the enemy killed, while blood tracks showed others had been wounded. The natives scaled down the steep hillside like goats, but volleys were fired after them, and some bodies rolled lifeless into the ravine.

Six villages including Nokouré were burnt. One was a village Kuindo had just built. He was preparing to hold a big pilou there, for bundles of spears and at least a thousand plumets or white feather cocades were found. These plumets were the regulation hair adornment for a feast, the tayos also whitening their faces with chalk—their nakedness otherwise was complete. (Battle dress was much the same, but they might blacken their eye-sockets, claiming it helped them to aim their spears and slings.) These objects were destroyed; also a hut full of

yams gathered for the fete.

The natives became so discouraged by this policy of starving them out that they no longer built regular villages, but mere ajoupas or bush shelters. One village that still awaited destruction, however, was Samaté, Kuindo's customary place of residence, in the territory of the Komba tribe. This was the objective of an unusually strong expedition which the new governor, du Bouzet, organised in May, 1857, in the hope of winding up the campaign.

This governor had returned to Tahiti after his first visit to New Caledonia in 1855 on the "Aventure," which had been wrecked near the Isle of Pines. He now brought with him a detachment of thirty marine infantry on the man-o'-war "Styx," as well as sections of a timber house which the artillery had originally erected for him at Tahiti. As there had been no communication with Tahiti for many months, he was surprised to hear of the critical situation here.

One of his decisions was to create a company of native tirailleurs or guards to co-operate against the marauding bands that haunted the neighbourhood. This was formed in May, 1857, but great difficulty was found in getting recruits, and a start had to be made with three tayos from the Isle of Pines, two from Watton's main village of Titema, and a man from Yahoué who was made corporal. At full strength the company was not to exceed twenty-five, including two native corporals. These were paid at the rate of twenty francs a month, and the men at fifteen francs, besides sailor's rations, including wine, a couple of pounds of tobacco and clothing. Actually the clothing amounted to very little, but the men at least carried rifles and cartridge pouches.

The corporal proved useful; he was an intelligent petty chief who knew all Kuindo's hangouts. His name was Andrew, and he had no reason to love the grand chief who had killed and eaten all the members of his family, and who would have killed him too had he not escaped to the Isle of Pines. Under a French non-commissioned officer the company was knocked into shape as it grew to authorised strength, and soon began to render real service.

The first expedition against Samaté met with disaster. The "Bayonnaise" boats transported the governor and a hundred men to Paita, from which place eight natives acted as guides. They were repeatedly shot at while making their way into the interior, and at the end of nearly a week were bivouacked in the hollow of a hill, with fires lit and sentries posted. The enemy were eight hundred yards

away, but order was given not to reply to their desultory fire, so the camp turned over and went to sleep. An hour or two later sentries roused everybody with the cry: "Aux armes! The kanaks are in camp." Soldiers began blazing away in all directions, and it was ten minutes before the voices of the governor and Major Testard restored order. Then it was found that three soldiers, Charpentier, Pichon and Padileau, had been killed by their comrades' fire, and three others severely wounded besides Corporal Carnet, who had been mistaken for a native and knocked senseless with a rifle-butt.

The enemy shouted their glee on hearing the moans of wounded and dying. The major ordered his N.C.O.'s to shove ramrods down the rifle barrels to find out who had been firing without orders. One sentry, thinking to escape detection, slipped a new cartridge into his gun but neglected to ram it home properly. Seeing a native rise from a bush and being known as a good marksman, he asked permission to fire. This was given, but his badly-loaded rifle burst and injured his hand so badly it had to be amputated.

Sadly next morning the party moved back to Gadgi where the boats had arrived with stores. There were delays due to the transportation of dead and wounded, and occasional attacks. The following story suggests the eerie feeling of being surrounded by hostile enemies. An officer was having a snack under a tree on which he hung his powder flask and a double-barrel gun, when he was told to take fifteen men and occupy a knoll which dominated the route. When he had gone a short distance he remembered he had forgotten his gun, and went back for it. He was too late, and yells of triumph followed his discomfiture as he was pursued by shots from his own gun.

After a half-way bivouac Gadgi was reached the following afternoon, and as the tide was low the soldiers passed dryshod on to a small peninsula transformed to an island at high tide. The dead were buried at sea. During the night natives crept through the water to some rocks from which they fired a volley which roused the sleeping camp. Return to Port-de-France was via the Dumbea River, on the road to which a few villages were burnt. After crossing the river, camp was being prepared and the governor was standing near a niaouli tree into which a soldier named Guyader had climbed to cut branches. A shot rang out and he fell at the governor's feet. It was impossible to locate his assailant in the surrounding bracken.

The town, it was found on arrival, had been alerted

several nights running, prowlers having been heard and shots fired; but the inhabitants were now case-hardened, and did not come rushing out of doors at the first sound of desultory shooting.

Mr. Bouquet de la Grye, the hydrographical engineer, had a great deal to complain about, for as fast as he put up his survey pegs on Ducos Peninsula, the Dumbea natives would quietly come along and remove them.

Kuindo by now had learnt his lesson, that he could not drive the French away; he even began to realise that if he wanted to keep his chiefly authority and preserve some of his lands he would have to sue for peace. This meant abandoning Jack Angara and Kandio, as well as Gombouara and the Yahoué marauders who had only been carrying out his orders. This meant little to him, so long as he could make it appear that he had not wantonly betrayed them, otherwise he would lose face.

The second expedition which the governor sent to Samaté therefore seems to have been a fixed-up affair, though some of its incidents are worth relating. A "Bayonnaise" whaleboat chased a fishing canoe two miles from shore, firing to make them stop. The four natives in the canoe dived overboard, and three reached shore unscathed. The fourth seemed asking for trouble; repeatedly fired at he repeatedly dived, once passing clean under the pursuing boat. A blow in the chest from a boathook stopped him, and a moment later a bullet broke his wrist. He was hauled on board and bound, expecting to be tortured and shot, and wishing to die like a man he started singing the warrior songs of his tribe. He said he belonged to Angara's tribe, and that he had killed some of the whites at Mont Dore.

The sailors admired his courage and took him to hospital in Port-de-France. Mortification had set in, but he at first refused to let the surgeon amputate his arm. When he finally consented he endured the operation without a murmur, calmly smoking a pipe. He stayed there for several months, unguarded and apparently grateful, but the day he was let out of hospital he was seen no more, preferring the liberty of the bush to the comforts of town.

Kuindo had given orders that his tayos were to retreat on Samaté, so the two French columns encountered no resistance. To the first column, led by Major Testard, Kuindo sent two men bearing tapas (fibre cloth) tied on branches, meaning that he wished to parley. He asked for something as a pledge of safe conduct, and received the major's telescope. Kuindo then came along with a few men, unarmed. But a few moments later a pall of smoke

rose on the air and shots were fired. The natives suspected treachery, but it turned out to be the second column which had approached the village from the other side. Soon the "cease fire" sounded and they rejoined the other column. The natives around had kept saying, "Burn our village if you like, but don't touch our plantations."

The soldiers piled arms, the tayos threw down their weapons, and the scene was friendly; biscuits and tobacco were handed round and the war of extermination seemed forgotten. It was noticed that some of the tayos had brown paper cartridges and caps of English origin, and when asked where they got them they replied in exchange for food from trepang boats passing Paita.

Kuindo was told he would have to come to Port-de-France and throw himself on the mercy of the French, and that his children would have to be left there as hostages. He replied that he would come if the major sent along his whip. This was because during hostilities whenever the latter wanted to talk to a chief, or wanted him to come to town, he would send along his silver-knobbed whip as a pledge the bearer would not be harmed.

Kuindo arrived at Port-de-France on 28th July and the governor's conditions were communicated to him. He was told he must recognise that all his lands belonged to the state, which could dispose of them as it liked; he was to hand over Jack Angara and his other allies, as well as all ammunition and arms in his possession; he was not to cross without authorisation to the south side of the Dumbea and only to enter Port-de-France by canoe unless he had special permission to come by land; and he was forbidden to molest the mission natives of La Conception and St. Louis.

Kuindo answered he would cede all his territories except those between Watton's St. Vincent-Paita domains and the Dumbea; but the reply was that he must unreservedly accept the French conditions. He then asked if he could go and consult his chiefs, and promised to return in two days' time. He would not give up the whip, although the major assured him he had nothing to fear without it.

He returned with his brother and one or two more chiefs, a tayo walking before them bearing a tomahawk wrapped in tapa as a sign of peace. Behind came the hostages, Paita and Baie, his two sons, and his nephew Koapitu. These children, aged from five years up, were put to school with the major's other wards. Kuindo also offered the major a young chieftainess named Koriki as a personal gift, but the soldier was strong-minded and refused. This girl had a pleasing face, was intelligent and

much lighter in colour than the ordinary popinée (native woman)—probably a half-caste.

Kuindo agreed to all conditions and promised not to give asylum to Kandio and Jack Angara, though he claimed he could not hand them over because as soon as they had heard of the peace overtures they had cleared out for the Touaourou country with their stolen arms. Kuindo handed in a few muskets belonging to his own men, but these were in a shocking condition, far more dangerous to the user than to the person fired at.

Warned that there would be trouble if he concealed other firearms, Kuindo replied that the chief of Nundo also possessed a few guns which he refused to surrender, and that he, Kuindo, although suzerain, had not been able to force him to give them up. He was told to warn Nundo that if he did not hand them over they would be fetched and his village punished.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE END OF GRAND CHIEF KUINDO

UNFORTUNATELY for Kandio and Jack Angara, the Touaourous refused to harbour such unwelcome guests, so like hunted vagrants they moved off and settled on waste land along the Woodin Canal, where they dug new plantations. Only Maké's men moved closer to Mont Dore.

Port-de-France had been reinforced since August by an infantry company under Captain de Brien, so the pursuit could be resumed on a bigger scale. The governor took personal command of an expedition which left by sea on 29th September, passing straight through the Woodin Canal without betraying any interest in the scenery so as not to scare the prey. They rounded Cap N'Dua to Yaté, which had never been openly hostile. Some time before Kati, chief of Ile Ouen (which forms one side of the Woodin passage) and Margenaki, chief at Ounia, had been sent for and imprisoned for a few days in Port-de-France, for having given asylum to the outlaws. Kati now warned the troops that a native had just arrived to spy for Angara, a man known to have killed two of the Mont Dore whites. Kati had left his capture to the French, fearing native vengeance if he himself intervened.

Corporal Andrew, the Tirailleur, was told off for the job, and approaching the man in friendly conversation, suddenly dropped his gun and leaped on his back. The tayo fell, then struggled to his feet and made off, carrying the corporal along with him. He was brought down by a piece of wood which somebody threw between his legs. This caused Andrew to let go, and the spy was instantly on his feet making great pace towards the bush when a bullet brought him low.

The "Milan," transporting the expedition, took the return route and anchored in the vast deep Baie du Sud, at the approach to the Woodin Canal. Here a landing was made in the dark, and the soldiers filed along the sea's edge, clambering over rocky points and wading through the water. A solitary hut was searched, but only found to contain a large native family rotten with leprosy.

Further on a group of huts was reached surrounded by a palisade. But a wretched kanak dog gave the alarm, and the natives, removing palings from the fence, were seen making off into the bush. They were fired on and next day one dead body was found. The agility of the

tayos was amazing. One, finding a soldier with musket and bayonet as well as the stockade between himself and liberty, took a flying leap clearing both fence and soldier, who fell over backwards in his astonishment.

Here were found goods stolen from the Bérard store at Morari. The plantations of course were destroyed and the huts burnt, and on 7th October the column returned to Port-de-France. Their activities resulted in the hunted men leaving the area and settling on Kuindo's land on the other side of Noumea peninsula, at a picturesque spot called Kombedau at the foothills of the Central Chain. Kuindo, thinking of his pact with the French, told them to go away, but when they refused, as he neither wanted to hand them over himself nor to see them die of hunger, he tacitly agreed to their building shelters in the gorges and woods, where they cached what was left to them of their Mont Dore spoils. They chose spots difficult of access for their plantations, which they hoped to harvest secretly.

Their life, on neutral if not hostile territory between the domains of Kuindo and Watton, was so pitiably uncomfortable that their numbers decreased daily. Kandio built his few ajoupas in the hills beyond Tongouin, while Jack Angara cleared a small valley a few miles further north on a hill so steep that to surprise him would be difficult.

One day Major Testard received information that the two chiefs had entered Watton's territory to cultivate land near the fishing village of Tongouin, a place Watton only visited occasionally when his men organised a big fishing expedition. The people of Ouaoué, a nearby village, told the French that the outlaws were now reduced to thirty men. They were expected along at a certain date.

It was an opportunity not to be missed. Sixty soldiers were landed at Ouaoué to surround Tongouin before dawn, but a misunderstanding on Capt. Arnaud's part led to a failure of carefully laid plans. Instead of preparing an ambush at the head of a gully—the obvious escape route for the outlaws—he followed the gulley down to the sea.

Meanwhile the main column, advancing in open order on the village, was spotted by a woman seeking water. She cried the alarm, giving Kandio, Angara and their men time to escape by the unguarded ravine. On the beach, instead of the enemy, the troops found Watton and his men with a tricolour flag on the end of a pole shouting greetings so that they would not be fired on by mistake.

Watton was asked to explain his presence in a village which harboured outlaws. It appeared he had already heartily cursed the local chief for informing the French

and for acting as their guide. "The presence of the outlaws here, in one of your villages, is regarded as proof of your complicity," the major bluntly told Watton, "and I warn you that you may be shot if a satisfactory explanation is not forthcoming."

Watton was in a blue funk, but he had an explanation ready. This was that he had only arrived during the night, but that the women of his adjoining tribes had been coming in for days because he, Watton, was staging a cras, or special fete for women. These cras were held at such rare intervals that old men declared they had not seen them more than once or twice in a lifetime. Furthermore, it was the custom to call a truce during such fetes, and enemy tayos could come in in perfect safety. By kanak usage Watton had therefore been obliged to receive these unwelcome guests and to treat them hospitably.

As the major still seemed unconvinced, Watton gave orders for the women to be brought. The greater part of them had fled into the bush like frightened does at the first sound of firing, but at the chief's command about three hundred shyly put in an appearance, mostly dressed like Eve, a spectacle for the soldiery who noted that many of them, however repellant of feature, had fine figures, while a small percentage were blessed with regular features.

Watton's daughter Jenny and his niece Kitty were among them; they came and said good-day to the officers and sat chatting unconcernedly while the other women stood shrinking in the background. This was because they had previously spent some time at Mr. Conneau's house and had learnt a little French and English. They had returned to Watton on Mr. Conneau's departure, and were then about ten years old. To confirm Watton's story, there were but few men about, not more than fifty in all, and they were all decked out and daubed for the fete.

It was the major's custom in Port-de-France to invite Watton to dine with him and his staff, and this chief, clad in his gala uniform and cap with badges of rank, had learnt to handle knife and fork. But on this particular day when the officers lunched—off banana leaves instead of plates—the chief was not invited, the intention being to humiliate him before his subjects.

As soon as the truce had expired Watton promised to chase the outlaws from his territories. We have seen how he more than kept his word. Not long after the fete five of Jack Angara's bucks carried off his niece Kitty, but returned her to her village after a fortnight, apparently unharmed.

The major's party split into two columns and went in pursuit of the enemy, who were yelling defiance from the hills around. The hills proved so slippery that it was best to climb barefoot. Only a few miserable huts and plantations were destroyed, and as the natives kept out of range a return was made to Paita after a day of excessive heat and exertion, for which the only compensation was Caledonia's rich panorama of mountain, coastline, reef and islet-dotted bays. At Paita a ship was waiting to take them home.

The villages of Komba's tribe, at the foot of the hills separating Watton and Kuindo territories, were visited at the end of 1857. This Komba recognised Kuindo's overlordship but was strong enough to be virtually independent. His haunts were little known, but Watton had denounced him to the French for harbouring rebels and for having aided Kuindo, apparently because he was afraid of him and coveted his lands.

Major Testard learnt that these unsubmitted tribes, including that of Nundo, had certain yam plantations ready to be harvested near the hill up the Dumbea known as Jacob's Ladder. He took out a strong white force, to which were added a hundred Conception mission natives, who were given permission to rob and destroy Komba's plantation and two hundred of Watton's tayos and women. At Paita, whither the "Milan," Commander de Petralo, brought the expedition, Watton made such a vehement speech that he foamed at the mouth. His subjects cheered vociferously. Then commenced a forced march by moonlight.

Komba's village was surrounded, those attempting to escape being sniped at, and then fired by the mission natives eager for spoil. Several native auxiliaries, eager to distinguish themselves, attacked an unarmed native who came towards them, and he fell mortally wounded. It turned out to be Komba himself. He was coming to ask the French why his village was being attacked.

Watton's savages and the mission natives were delighted next day to come across stores of soap, calico and tobacco, which they divided up among themselves. The party moved to Kuindo's territory and that chief came to meet them. The officers took possession of a large hut, hoping to get a good night's rest, but were chased out by fleas and found it best to burn down their lodging.

The mission natives, bowed down under the weight of yams and other booty, now left accompanying a number of prisoners to the coast. They were to bring back stores, while the white column moved on to Nundo's village. This

was found to be deserted.

Kuindo went off into the bush to look for Nundo, to tell him to hand over his firearms to the French and to plead for pardon. The latter presently appeared bitterly upbraiding his grand chief for betraying him and acting as guide to the French after being the real instigator of the war. In the course of the argument Nundo admitted having two muskets and promised to go back and fetch them.

The natives were put on the job of building shelters for the whites, even Watton and Kuindo not disdaining to lend a hand, a strange come-down for grand chiefs whose subjects' heads had formerly rolled at their least nod. Presently Nundo came along with his two muskets but without his men.

Next day another village was surprised and burnt, and the mission natives obtained a second fine crop of looted yams, their women, as usual, acting as beasts of burden. Then a return was made to the coast, Kuindo and Watton accompanying the whites.

It was no idle boast when Nundo swore to be revenged on Kuindo, his betrayer, only the opportunity was to arrive sooner than he had hoped for. Being on Kuindo's territory, he was obliged by native custom to pay tribute by annually reserving a few of his plantations for the grand chief. In June, 1858, the latter came along to examine his crops. He was not satisfied with their extent or productivity, and threatened Nundo.

Kuindo had only brought ten people in all with him, his two brothers, two other tayos and some women. No doubt he fancied himself safe among his vassals and did not realise how low his prestige had fallen. Nevertheless it is marvellous that a man so cunning and suspicious should let himself be caught as Nundo caught him. As a youth he had been treacherously attacked by one of his uncles, with whom he had quarrelled, and who had given him a blow with an axe which broke his jaw and left him permanently mutilated. Since then he had almost invariably slept at some distance from the rest of his subjects, surrounded like a modern gangster with a small bodyguard.

At any rate the precautions taken on this occasion were inadequate. The hut allotted to him was not far from the village, and here Nundo surprised him during the night and slaughtered the whole party with the exception of one woman, who fled to Port-de-France. She explained that the tribes would now surely come to fetch the young chief Paita, Buindo's heir-presumptive who was still a hostage

of the French.

Sure enough, two days later three old natives put in an appearance to beg the child. They were arrested, but declared that Kuindo's death had been a matter of personal revenge and all that they were concerned about was to take Paita back with them so that he could be acclaimed as grand chief. As murderous intent was suspected, these three were put in chains and later exiled to Tahiti.

Even before Kuindo's end, the country extending from the Touaourou territory in the south to St. Vincent, forty or fifty miles north of Noumea, had been largely pacified and thrown open to settlement. It was now safe to encourage emigration, and it was made known in Australia and in France that the state was offering grants of up to four or five thousand hectares (12,000 acres) conditional on the introduction of quotas of white and other settlers. The growing of sugar-cane, of coffee and of corn and rice were to be encouraged; while the subjugation of the natives freed the white troops and colonists in the Noumea district for urgent undertakings like roads and bridges, construction of wharves and town drainage, and the erection of administrative buildings and settlers' homesteads. From this time date the completion of Fort Constantine, government stores, a big military bakehouse, the treasury building, and two main wharves at which boats of a hundred and fifty tons could tie up. Men of the corvette "Thisbe" also completed a naval store.

During early years supplies had been scarce and irregular, often meaning long stretches of seamen's rations for everybody in town. Fish was a standby, but fresh meat was far from plentiful owing to the troubled times, it being necessary to risk an excursion a few miles outside the town boundaries to shoot and bring in a bullock. There was in most months, however, a sufficiency of vegetables, each small shack being as a rule provided with a garden.

For services rendered and to boost morale, Governor du Bouzet gave streets the names of officers and leading officials, but most of them have since been changed or forgotten. Though possibly few Caledonians are aware of it, Ile Nou was for a while called Ile du Bouzet, after this governor.

The main streets, Rue Sebastopol, Rue d'Alma, etc., were named after battles in the Crimean War, and these names have stuck. The original Government House, consisting of the governor's residence and offices in grounds running down from Signal Hill, as well as the offices of the director of the interior, were built from timber construc-

tion used by the French staff in that war. Government House, for example, had been the headquarters of Marshal St. Arnaud, the French commander; while the town's first Catholic chapel just opposite had performed the same service in Russia for the marshal and his staff.

Though Noumea's barracks are called after Colonel Gally-Passeboc, ambushed by the kanaks in the 1878 insurrection, and although the public garden boasts a statue of Admiral Olry, there is neither street nor square nor building named after two soldiers who played a more distinguished part in French colonial history. These two are Major Testard, guardian of the township in her first anxious years, who later died a hero's death in Cochin-China, and Major Rivière, who suppressed the 1878 revolt and who was afterwards massacred by Annamite Pavillons Noirs in Tonkin.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FIRST OF PIONEERS

BY 1860 the island's trade with Australia, concentrated on Port-de-France, was rapidly increasing. Paddon's schooners "Henriette," "Maid of Australia," "Caroline," "Champion," "Maria," "Black Dog," the brig "Julia Percy" and others were making regular voyages to Sydney and to branch trading posts along the coast. The English sailor went into partnership with Charles Edwards, forming the trading company of J. Paddon & Cie, of which he held two-thirds of the shares. Their store was opposite where Maison Ballandes is to-day.

Those were the days when bars were attached to business premises, and we read in one of the first numbers of the "Moniteur Impérial" that the company was fined twenty-five francs with costs for serving the military with drinks during working hours. The neighbouring firm of Knoblauch et Cie was fined two hundred francs for a similar offence. The island's penal code, as yet unwritten, was administered on the Australian rather than the French model, Australian legal procedure being even quoted in the courts, but this was soon drastically suppressed by a new governor who declared it "shocking," and since then Caledonia has followed the same judicial procedure as any other French colony.

Paddon had four daughters by his New Hebridean wife. They were Louise, born in Tanna in 1854, Betsy, born in Erromango, and Elisabeth and Bella born at Ile Nou. Madame le Riche, the surviving daughter, to-day over 84 years of age, tells me that her father, after his naval training, left England without telling his family where he was going. First he landed in America, and it was from there that his Pacific adventures started. In 1940 the Pan-American meteorologist took over the Ile Nou house that was once her father's. Included in Paddon's property in Noumea was the site of Ballandes stores, sold for 1,200,000 after his death.

Paddon's square-rigged figure and nautical ways are still a legend in the colony. Particular about dress and manner, he was yet not a man to worry over much about the so-called comforts of civilisation. On Ile Nou he and his chief clerk Knoblauch occupied a back room in one of the stores, the furniture of which consisted of a clothes locker and a bed each, the bed being of the pioneer type—

four stakes in the ground supporting two poles on which were stretched a couple of hides. He would be about from dawn to dark watching the island's trade flowing into this main establishment from east, west, north and south, an establishment consisting of three stores, trading with whites, natives and employees; a butchering establishment, served by his own cattle run; two sawmills, partly for milling local timber for building purposes, partly for milling logs for export, especially the sandalwood logs brought in by the trade schooners; a lime kiln; and then an immense barracks for the native workers.

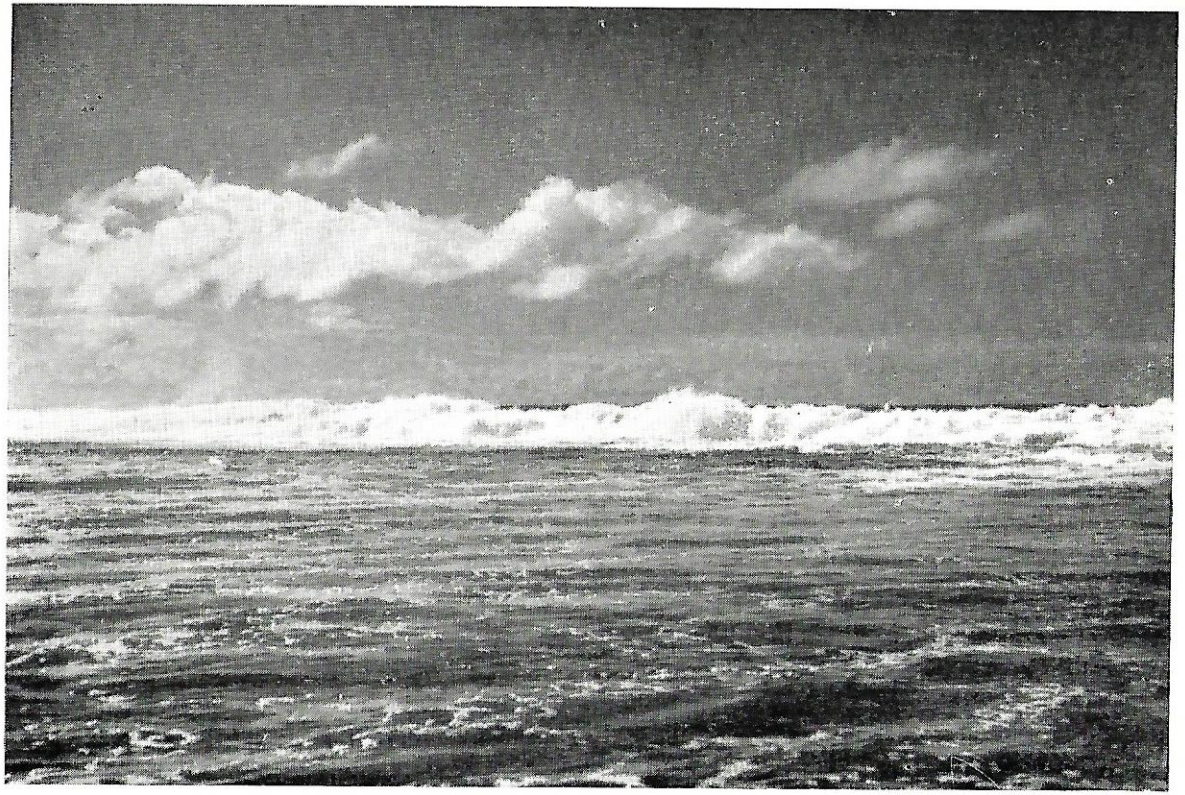
The personnel, apart from the boss and his accountant, consisted of some two hundred and sixty natives and sixty Europeans, the latter occupying small huts of their own scattered around the main buildings. This isolated crowd of men, white and black, used to commence work at six o'clock in the stores, at the lime-kilns, at the slaughtering, or attending to the cattle or the cultivation, in the saw-mills, unloading or loading the boats, or repairing and re-rigging them. They worked intensively all day, save for short meal-times, until nightfall, when it was their habit to retire to their huts and barracks.

In dealings with the natives, both in his Ile Nou days and afterwards at Paita, the French found Paddon an invaluable friend. He understood how to deal with blacks, was friendly with their chiefs, and gave the white settlers much sound advice. Early governors and officials came to look on him as an invaluable friend. His sudden death from blood poisoning, which killed him off in two days at the early age of forty-nine and at the height of his powers, stunned the little community which looked on him as its "father."

Paddon died on 14th February, 1861, and was buried in the town's first cemetery in the Vallée du Tir which exists no more. The whole township attended the funeral. In the absence of a Protestant minister the burial service was read by his nephew Horatio Martin, familiarly known as "Cranky" Martin. M. Guys, a leading citizen and president of the Chamber of Commerce, pronounced the funeral discourse, in which he outlined Paddon's twenty years of Pacific adventuring, and lauded him as a note-worthy possessor of "that spirit of the British trader and mariner which has placed England in the forefront of commercial nations."

"Paddon," he added, "was a valued colonist. No difficulty was too great for his indefatigable energy to surmount, no trouble too much for his essential goodness of

The Roche Percée, or Hole-in-the-Rock, at Bourail on the west coast, is a familiar landmark near what, in penitentiary days, was New Caledonia's second township. War has made the rock a favourite bathing resort for American and New Zealand soldiers.



(Photo. Dunn, Noumea.)

Surf on the great barrier reef, which surrounds the island and extends far to the north-east and south-west—over 800 miles in length. The graveyard of over 100 fine ships, including the world's largest sailing ship, "La France."

heart. Outwardly tough and rugged, within was noble generosity and enthusiasm. In the darkest days he helped our administrative services, assured supplies for our garrison and marine, and whoever sought work never turned to him in vain. Messieurs, in saying his death is a great loss for our colony, I am only speaking what is in the mind of us all."

In the month of April five years later Paddon's remains were removed to a handsome mausoleum on his property at Paita, near the village he founded. A ship was specially chartered to take Governor and Madama Guillain, Colonial Secretary Mathieu and one hundred and fifty Noumea citizens up the coast to the ceremony, which was in the nature of a picnic outing. Surely no Englishman dying in a French colony ever received such sincere and heartfelt tribes as were contained in the valedictory speeches then uttered.

Paddon's old Catholic friend Père Montrouzier, whose schemes for ameliorating the condition of the native had the mariner's complete support, said on behalf of those same natives: "Capt. Paddon was a fair-minded man, he never attempted to deceive a soul; he never believed that difference of colour gave any man the right to oppress another; furthermore he was generous and we all loved him."

The French father added that though Paddon was of another faith they were proud of his sympathy and his help. His intelligence was matched by his character; he understood men and things, summing them up at a glance with a sureness that never failed. He was not blind to the natives' faults, but so far as possible closed his eyes to them, opening them rather to see their good qualities, so that with him they always revealed their better side. His optimism was not Utopian, and his practical good sense in all matters concerning the welfare and progress of the colony could now be appreciated at its real value. His own success had shown what could be achieved by individual initiative, courage, perseverance and hard work. Providence should be thanked for having given them as their leading pioneer a man whose example, if followed, would ensure the prosperity of New Caledonia.

The Colonial Secretary referred to Paddon's origins: "Born at Portsmouth, in Hampshire, in 1812, his early reading of the voyages of Captain Cook, the sight of the fine ships which had formed the fleets of Nelson and of Collingwood, the yarns of old seamen of naval battles round

the opening of the century, all these had fired him with ambition to become a sailor. Shipping as a midshipman on board a man-o'-war, he dreamt that one day it would be his privilege to lead his crew into action. His hopes were disappointed, for after long years of fighting and carnage, the European nations were again at peace. Paddon, therefore, led by that proud spirit of adventure which characterises the Anglo-Saxon race, and by those ideas of independence and liberty which distinguish the sons of Albion, abandoned position, family and country, in pursuit of the unknown, finally unfolding his tent surrounded by the troubled waters of the Pacific, working with all his might to implant English influence among the savages of the South Seas."

Speeches over, the gathering climbed to the shelter of an enormous hut specially erected for the occasion, from which they enjoyed a fine view over the wooded heights of Kogi and Mont Mou, and the green plains below where two thousand head of Paddon's cattle were grazing along the meanderings of the Karikouie creek. There was feasting and junketing, with toasts to Paddon's memory drunk in champagne which flowed in torrents amid cries of "Again! Again!" Below, still wilder cries arose from huts along the Paita River, where the natives, too, were drinking champagne to the memory of a dead Englishman. In spite of the rain which began to fall, they kept up their pilou all night.

Garnier, the French mining engineer, who never met Paddon, tells in his book "Océanie," published in Paris in 1871, how green remained his memory. He calls him "An Englishman whose name is still living in New Caledonia, spoken of with respect wherever you go. Whenever he arrived in a tribe it was to find a cargo ready prepared for him. Often, in my travels to the north of the island, little visited by whites, the natives spoke to me of this man, dead though he had been for years. They rejoiced to sing his praises. I looked round me for the reason why the memory of a white could so keenly impress itself on the savage mind, usually so indifferent or forgetful, and found that Paddon was a man of great generosity, a man who paid up without bargaining, who even added something over and above his bargain when he was satisfied. In addition he possessed a firm and resolute character, and his courage was equal to anything. It was his practice never to let pass unpunished any action committed to his detriment, but at the same time he never through the slightest display of meanness or rudeness refused the hand of friendship held

out to him by a kanak."

These words of Garnier's testify to Paddon's qualities, as does the respect with which his name is still honoured in the colony to-day. Lesser men in better known lands have had whole libraries devoted to them.

CHAPTER XVI.

GOLD RUSH

PADDON was the first to send a specimen of New Caledonian gold to Sydney, probably obtained by one of his sailors from the granite areas of the north, though gold has also been found at La Foa, and at St. Louis near Noumea. Gold was to be the initial attraction for many—for this was the age in history most bitten by the gold fever—but other minerals were to be the final reward.

Geologists like the Englishman W. B. Clarke, writing in 1851, had already predicted that the island, like Australia, would be found rich in precious metals, and within a few years prospectors were to arrive to back up that opinion with their lives.

The first arrival seems to have been a miner named Gratien Brun, who left Sydney on one of Paddon's boats and went to look for gold in the Canala district and further north. One day while prospecting near Huailu beach, he was surprised by a band of natives who killed and ate his white companions. He alone escaped, thanks to the devotion of a native named Sandouli, who later became a corporal of tirailleurs at Canala. After a return trip to Australia, Brun settled in Noumea. He was a man of many trades. He started as a baker delivering bread from a basket borne on the back of a donkey; then became a carrier and lime-kiln owner; and eventually he sold his town interests out to a Mr. Francois and went in for cattle-raising. Like Paddon he died a millionaire, in francs.

The difficulty with the kanak in these early days was his ability to hide cunning and treachery under a mask of innocence, as yet another story will show. In the year 1856 a party of seven prospectors, Frenchmen who had come with Mr. Pannetrat to Canala, went off to look for the precious metal. Most of them had already joined in the Californian gold rush after sharing Count de Boulbon's strange adventures in Mexico. So they were hardy and determined men, as prospectors necessarily are.

They landed at Huailu, which lies between Canala and Hienghene at about the middle of the east coast. The natives received them amicably, and for several days they proceeded up one of the most charming valleys in all New Caledonia, panning the creeks that ran down steep and crystal clear from the mountains. The natives accompanied them, and everything seemed so friendly that as they were

all well armed they gradually relaxed precautions.

Confidence was their downfall. The day came when, hot and sweating after an onerous march, they reached a difficult crossing at a place called Boughouat, on the right bank of the Huailu River. Up to this point they had insisted on carrying their great packs themselves, but when the natives, who belonged to the Atouma tribe, offered to help carry them over, they were glad to accept.

This was just what the savages were waiting for. Each of the seven was quickly surrounded with a little group of tayos helping him to unload his gear. The procedure was interrupted by a pre-arranged signal, whereupon six of the seven fell, their heads gashed bloodily open with axes or birds' beak tomahawks. The names of five of them were Granet, Comina, Barrouet, Caille and Leclerc. Their bodies were afterwards cut up, cooked and eaten to the accompaniment of a pilou.

The seventh man who—believe it or not—was named Acrobat, was merely stunned. He would have been quickly dispatched but for the intervention of a chief who reserved him as prisoner, the consideration being that he would be able to teach them how to use the firearms taken from his dead companions which were the chief's share of the loot.

Acrobat some little time after, taking advantage of a dark night, stole away into the bush, and when the sleeping tribesmen awoke they were unable to find him In great physical and mental anguish he wandered for two days and nights before reaching the coast. Here he was found and looked after by one of those lonely English sailors living a semi-native life who may possibly have been one of Paddon's agents. This sailor took him along to the Catholic mission at Tiwaka, north of Huailu, where efforts were made to question him on his terrible experiences.

Alas, poor Acrobat! His reason gone, he could give no connected account of himself. For years afterwards he wandered disconsolately up and down the warm green coast, living on the generosity of the natives. They treated him with a deference related to fear, for like most primitive peoples they believed the mad to be possessed of devils and were superstitiously in awe of him. Acrobat was last seen at Canala in 1866, ten years after the events related, after which he disappears from the scene, his tired body sunk on what coconut-fringed beach or in what hidden gulley nobody knows.

The story of the expedition which the French sent out to avenge the Huailu massacre is of interest particularly for its cannibalistic incident. The "Bayonnaise" gunboat,

Commander Libris, was sent from Port-de-France and called at Canala to enlist the aid of Aliki-Kai. "I want you," the commander told him, "to bring along your warriors and help me give the Huailus toupai (hell)!"

But the grand chief raised objections. It was not his war, he said, and he wanted to keep on good terms with his neighbours.

"If you and your tayos don't come," replied the Frenchman, abandoning persuasion for cunning, "then I shall know it is because you are afraid of the Huailus, and I shall no longer regard you as a great chief."

This rejoinder was so little to Aliki-Kai's taste and so piqued his vanity that he soon had his men in their canoes following the gunboat up the coast. Arrived at the mouth of the Huailu River, the village was shelled and a landing made. The inhabitants had already taken to the bush, leaving a few dead behind, killed by the bombardment.

The Canalas were at liberty to pillage and burn the village, this being the recognised reward for their support. They then asked for permission to pass the night celebrating their victory on a neighbouring islet. This was granted them, but a curious French officer smelt a rat and spoilt their little game. In the semi-darkness he noticed a canoe put off from the rush-lined river bank, covered with banana leaves and supposedly laden with yams and taros despoiled from the Huailu plantations.

He sent a boat after it, and beside the native vegetables the canoe was found to contain a number of arms and legs, those of the unhappy victims of the day's action. Orders were given for the canoe to be escorted out to sea, where the contents were thrown overboard, to be devoured not by humans but by sharks. The Canalas afterwards pretended it had never been their intention to stage a cannibal kai-kai. They were, they claimed, just normal innocent folk, good fathers and husbands anxious merely to show the arms and legs, legitimate trophies of war, to their adoring wives and children back home.

It was in March, 1863, that New Caledonia experienced its first real gold rush. One day Noumea watched some tall lean strangers stroll up from the wharf and book rooms at one of the hotels on the Place. Excitement grew with the news that they were real Australian prospectors. Staid citizens decided to get in early on what might prove a good gamble, so they put their hands in their pockets and staked the diggers, packing them off hopefully to the east coast. Eventually news leaked back that payable gold had been struck.

The town's temperature rose immediately. The "Moniteur Imperial" of 28th June, 1863, under the heading "EUREKA" in the largest type at its disposal—how many times, in how many different parts of the world, has not that same heading been used in similar circumstances, all too often with exaggerated optimism!—relates the story of the "discovery," which was at a place called Huoehiahom in the Pouebo district.

The news was greeted with similar enthusiasm at Canala. The governor happened to be there on the "Coetlogen," and half the tiny settlement embarked with him for the scene of operations. Gold is man's god, in New Caledonia as elsewhere, and the scene that followed their arrival raises a smile of pity at the fallibility of human hopes. Portentously and reverently, in the presence of the head of the colony and his officials, the French director of the enterprise, Mr. Lozeron, panned a few spadesful of earth and passed the dish from hand to hand. It contained a few specks of gold. The governor promised to send samples to Noumea to be assayed, and these were later forwarded to Paris by the first available ship. They were reported on the following year. Unfortunately in the meantime the experienced Australian diggers had decided that the game was not worth the candle, and had packed up and returned to Sydney. Garnier later confirmed their opinion that the area would not be payable to exploit.

The discovery by Australians of a real gold mine, the Fernhill, near the Diahot River, belongs to the 1870's and will not be dealt with here. They received a grant for the discovery from the New Caledonian Government. The mine was worked successfully for eight or nine years, but then operations were found too costly and it was closed down. To-day the old workings are quite fallen in. But the few people who have ever been there declare that there is gold in all the creeks which run into the upper Diahot.

The story of the first discovery of mineral wealth in New Caledonia, according to a legend preserved by Vivien and Co., the great Swansea smelting company, is told by Mr. G. M. Calvocoresse, an American mining engineer who was here about the turn of the century. In the year 1845, he states, a British frigate skirted south-east along the coast and dropped anchor in the Bay of Prony. Boats were sent ashore to obtain water and some of the sailors noticed lumps of a peculiar bluish-black clay which stained their fingers purple and which took a high shiny polish when rubbed. They brought a bagful back to the ship and one of the officers with a scientific turn of mind took the bag

with him to England and sent it along to the Viviens, where the chemists recognised the presence of cobalt and manganese. The clay was really asbolane, a cobaltiferous manganese oxide with which for a decade or two towards the end of last century New Caledonia was to supply the greater part of the world's cobalt demand. At the time no use was made of the discovery, probably owing to the remoteness of the island.

According to Noumea legend, Père Montrouzier had signalled the presence of copper at Koumac in 1843. The copper mines of the lower Diahot were not discovered until thirty years later, and have only been sporadically exploited since.

The Lucky Hit mine, discovered and worked by Australian diggers in the vicinity of Mont Dore, was the first serious attempt to exploit chromite in the colony. But that was in 1880, a long time after the period dealt with in this book.

Nickel was first discovered in New Caledonia in the year 1865 by Jules Garnier, member of the French corps of mining engineers sent out to study the island's resources. His reports were of great value. The discovery also was on Mont Dore, which dominates the Plum region where M. Bérard was murdered. One ton of crude ore was loaded on a whaleboat and rowed by convicts to the capital whence it was shipped to Paris. On this, the first ton extracted—containing about 12 per cent nickel—the present Société le Nickel was founded by Paddon's one-time employee Higginson.

Garnier is outstanding among the early explorers of the island. Most of the country he visited was wholly uncivilised. Yet in constant danger from the natives, he followed up the rivers to their sources in the mountains, descending to the coast again to voyage to the mouth of another river, of necessity following this up in turn since overland travel for any distance was wholly impossible.

He reported the existence of huge bodies of limonite (iron ore), deposits of copper and chrome, but his most important discovery was the green nickeliferous magnesia silicate which bears his name—garnierite. Professor Liversidge of Sydney analysed these ores, dividing them into two kinds which he named garnierite and noumeaite, but the former name is now indiscriminately applied to both. The equally valuable chocolate ore, in which not silica and magnesia but iron is the chief constituent, was only discovered and exploited later.

On his return to Europe, Garnier interested himself

in the smelting of nickel ores, and the first smelters erected at Point Chaleix near Noumea several years later used the system he developed. He wrote some of the most interesting books about the colony, and the publication, in 1867, of his mining report is of historic importance, forming the first of a series of geologic reports on New Caledonia which have resulted in the development of the island's chief industry.

Garnier is certainly one of the great names in the colony's history. To-day the chrome and nickel industries which he primarily started account in normal years for over 90 per cent of the island's total exports.

CHAPTER XVII.

MURDER ON MASSACRE FLAT

THE south pacified, allowing the introduction of settlers as far as Bouloupari, the scene of massacre now shifts up the west coast. Here the tribe of Pouangué, in the neighbourhood of the present township of Voh, cut out a coastal vessel, the "Reine des Iles," killing and eating a woman, two natives and two Frenchmen. They then cut down the mast, pillaged the ship and abandoned her. This was one of the incidents which earned for the Gatopé plateau reef, between Voh and Koné, the title of Massacre Reef.

Three Europeans were living in the native village of Gatopé. Their blood lust roused, the natives went there in strength, intending to kill these whites, whose occupation was bêche-de-mer fishing. Fortunately they were on good terms with the village natives, who warned them what was afoot, so that when the hostile party arrived they beat a hasty retreat to their boat and pushed out into the stream. In doing this, one of them was wounded with a spear.

By a happy chance the abandoned "Reine des Iles" was floating not far from shore. They climbed aboard her blood-stained decks, rigged up a jury mast with a sail from their own boat, and set sail south. Presently they spotted a sail beating up towards them . It proved to be the "Fine," a Sydney-built 100-ton schooner which the French had bought to chart and reconnoitre the coast. She was also investigating whether the coastal plains north of Bouloupari offered a suitable field for future settlement.

The reefs of this coast were then a serious obstacle to navigation. Even to-day they are the scene of occasional wrecks, for the passes are tricky and difficult. The trouble is that unlike the east coast, these reefs do not always leave a wide channel of inland sea for coastal shipping, but sometimes run in near the coast so that shipping has to take to the open sea. The danger from submarine reefs and blocks is real, the cause of disaster particularly in bad weather and bad light. To make matters worse, the coast was at this time densely populated with savages continually at war among themselves who had had little or no contact with the white.

The "Fine" was followed by the brig "Gazelle" with stores, and by the steamship "Fulton" having the governor on board. He had only just heard of the murder of a

French colonist at a place called Ouagap by members of the Poindi-Patchili tribe, and the "Reine des Iles" affair worried him still further, for the same tribe was implicated. The influence of their notorious grand chief Gondou extended right across the island to the other coast.

Attached to the "Fine" was a tiny coastal vessel named the "Secret." She had a crew of four in addition to her captain, Gérard, an apprentice pilot from Noumea. Her duty was to precede the larger vessel through the reefs making soundings.

One of three men who had escaped from Gatopé was a Swede named Petersen, who during the campaign of punishment which followed was to render useful service as pilot and interpreter. He was one of those men who figure in South Sea novels, an adventurer simple and direct in language and manners as Robinson Crusoe, cool in judgment and at his best in moments of peril. Solitude had no fears for him; he was happy in an atmosphere of danger and commanded the respect of the natives as much for his address and courage as for his bodily strength. He had lived for many years among these tribes, with gun and pistol ever handy, and had witnessed many an extraordinary and terrifying event. His manner of relating them made the eyes even of hardened old shellbacks pop out of their heads.

To this man the governor listened with interest, then ordered the "Fine" to take him aboard and cruise to the scene of the "Reine des Isles" disaster. The passage followed was one which no government ship had used since the "Duroc" was there in 1855. While returning to France, this "Duroc" had subsequently run on the Melish islet between Caledonia and the Torres Straits. This shipwreck aroused interest in Europe on account of the fortitude of the master, his young wife and their little daughter, as well as the rest of the crew.

The "Secret" followed two and a half miles behind the "Fine" and closer inshore, losing what breeze there was. The captain thought that on account of her shallow draft and the prevailing high tide, he would be able to cross the Paquiepé plateau, momentarily submerged, and anchor a little further out. He was mistaken, and stuck fast at a place where the "Fine" could not come to his assistance. The "Fine" thereupon dropped anchor where she was.

Native eyes were watching, and soon after the "Secret" stuck the hillsides were covered with blacks. Primarily they showed interest in the "Fine," a larger ship than they were accustomed to seeing, but hawk-like some of

them noted the plight of her tiny satellite.

Most were men of the tribe of Mongo, and allied villages of the coastal belt. This chief had once been powerful, but Petersen, who knew him well, declared that he had lost much of his influence after wars with Gondou and the Poindi-Patchili. This war of extermination had brought him so low that he and his people, a remnant of their former selves, after living for a time on roots and fish, had taken refuge at Gatopé, settling among unimportant allied tribes. They had, however, participated with some of Gondou's men in the "Reine des Iles" affair.

Petersen persuaded Mongo and his two adopted sons, Ti and Pouagui, to come on board the "Fine," where they half persuaded and half bullied him into blurting out the truth. It was the first time the old man had been on board a white ship, and he went about bent almost double, his face oozing veneration as though he was in some sacred place and in the presence of gods.

After dinner, about five-thirty in the evening, some little time before a brilliant Caledonian sunset, the captain, M. Banaré, looked towards the "Secret." He remarked to one of his men that he could no longer see her masts and presumed that she must have got off the reef and moved elsewhere. Next morning he again looked for the masts, but in vain. So he sent a lookout man aloft, who reported that the little vessel was still stuck in the original place, but dismasted and surrounded with blacks.

A boat was sent out under Petersen, but long before she could get to the reef those on board were seen to be wading ashore—it was now low tide—their shoulders laden with goods. A yawl was sent beachwards to interrogate the kanaks, but these understood or pretended to understand nothing, not even bichelamar. They only laughed ironically at everything said to them. But presently old Mongo, following the crew to the top of a hillock, suddenly raised his cracked voice and shouted: "Allsame man Oui-oui maté maté kai-kai" ("Frenchmen on board all killed and eaten"). He added that it was the Pouangués who had committed the deed.

Arrived at the reef, Petersen and his men found the "Secret" lying on her side. The only trace of her crew was the bloodstained deck and cabin. For want of a better witness, Mango's account of what had happened was accepted as trustworthy. He said the tayos of Pouantloiché had joined the "Reine des Iles" murderers; at low water they had waded across to the "Secret" along the partly covered reef. They had climbed aboard without

meeting resistance, the whites believing they had come to barter.

On deck were the captain and three sailors, and they were speedily knocked on the head. Then the natives went below and killed Bonnin, the fourth sailor, who was asleep in his hammock. Their bodies were carried ashore, two as kai-kai for the Pouantloitché, two for the Pouangué, while the fifth was cut into pieces which were sent round as gifts to other tribes. Mango added that his own share had been a leg.

His story implicated two grand chiefs, Gondou and the head of the Poindi-Patchilis. The former, much feared and of great influence, was turbulent and detested by his neighbours. One of them said of him: "Gondou not like other man, he like dog; when he see tayo of another tribe, he bark. He eats many men."

These chiefs had never come under French influence and had never submitted; in fact they thought they would always be safe in their difficult and rugged mountains, Taom, Ouatilou, Tchingou, Kopeto and the rest. It was now for the first time that the French began to assemble what information was available about them and their territories, proving how neglected this coast had been up to then.

Mango's natives pulled the "Secret" off the reef and their canoes towed her close to the "Fine." They then produced sixty-five francs in five-franc pieces, asking to exchange them for tobacco and pipes. They were naive enough not to try and disguise the fact that the money had come from the loot of the "Reine des Iles." One of them even went up to Mr. Banaré and promised to get him the ship's compass in return for a certain number of blankets. Petersen was acquainted with this savage, one of the fiercest of the Pouangué, and his looks did not belie him. He had long thick bestial lips, his red pupils half concealed eyes that roamed heavily from side to side like those of a wild animal, and there was enormous strength in his heavy if badly proportioned body. This man was sent off to get the compass, but did not return.

The crew of the "Fine" were virtually prisoners on board their own ship until the arrival of the "Fulton" and a troop transport, the "Bonite," bringing the governor with sufficient men to make it possible to organise expeditions to punish the massacres of the two crews and of colonist Taillard, killed at Ouagap.

One column was to give Gondou a lesson. It left Ouagap with orders to exact that chief's submission, and

authority to shoot any native that offered the least resistance. There were sixty white soldiers with this column and two hundred native allies under six chiefs, who were soon joined by a seventh, young Dongo of the Ounouas, Gondou's confirmed enemy.

After some time this column was joined at the Baie Chasseloup by a second column composed of fifty whites from the "Fulton" and three or four hundred native auxiliaries. Most of the coastal villages were found deserted and destroyed, but the mountain ones, whose inhabitants had hardly heard of or seen the white man, were surprised in a succession of night marches. Huts with their occupants were ruthlessly burnt. "C'est cruel, mais c'est d'une terrible logique," remarks Jules Garnier who had command of the six hundred auxiliaries. Gaté and Koné were among the places destroyed.

Arrived near Gondou's main village, six native warriors were seen coming to meet the expedition bearing a white tapa as sign of peace. They were kept as hostages. They explained that they had come out to ask why their territory was being ravaged and their people killed. Unfortunately much of their meaning was not clear because they spoke a dialect which nobody there could understand.

These unhappy men were conducted on board the "Bonite," and when faced with the governor thought their last hour had come. Suddenly, as if with one impulse, they eluded the sailors who were guarding them, leapt the rail and made for the shore. The sailors opened fire, but found them difficult to hit as for the most part they swam under water, only coming up for an occasional breath. Boats were lowered and soon came up with them as they could not swim fast, and they were knocked insensible with boat-hooks and dragged on board.

Their misfortunes did not end here. Sent to Noumea, they spent three weary months in prison, then managed to outwit the gendarmes and escape. Naturally they made northward, and the French called in the aid of Watton and other allies to stop them. The tayos soon got on their trail, and they were eventually caught crossing the Tontouta River. Like the savages they were, the native auxiliaries, instead of handing them over to the French, knocked them on the head and ate them.

Arrived further north the governor organised a third column to tame the Pouangué and Poinloché tribes. At one village they came to, three freshly skinned human skulls were found on top of a high perch, surrounded by bones to which some rotten flesh still clung. They proved to be the

remains of the sailors of the "Secret," whose weapons were found in a hut close by. The flesh on the bones had been partly roasted, and on the bones themselves could be seen the big toothmarks of hungry cannibals. What was left of them received decent burial.

From the hills above, the Poinloché howled down execrations as they saw their villages going up in smoke and their plantations destroyed. Those interested in mining may like to know that the extremely heavy stones which were hurled at their attackers on this occasion were lumps of sulphate of barytes. Although this ore, and of excellent quality, exists in different parts of New Caledonia, the one or two mines "declared" in modern times have never been exploited. Although the present war has created a demand, shortage of labour at the moment makes their operation out of the question.

Leaving a pathway of destruction, the column arrived at Pamalé, principal village of Gondou's famous allies with the magnificent name, the Poindi-Patchili, the tribe that had given asylum to the Ouagap murderers from the east coast. A small advance party broke into the sleeping village, but the alarm was quickly given and the inhabitants escaped into the bush.

One of the chiefs assisting the French, a man named Kahoua, yellow-skinned rather than black, was treated with extraordinary deference by the other auxiliaries. When the French hoisted their flag at Balade he had been chief of territory extending between Touho and Hienghene on the eastern side. Long had he been a bitter enemy of the whites, and though eventually subdued, he nourished hatred in his heart and they did not trust him. He wore a shirt and a soft felt hat, but from his lips flowed taunts and sarcasms at their expense.

Surfeited with destruction, the expedition finally returned to the "Bonite" and the "Fulton" with their prisoners. A garrison of fifty men was installed at Gatopé, near Voh, for whom a blockhouse was built—the first step towards colonisation. It is only since 1930 that the colony's principal road, known as Route Coloniale Number 1, has been put through the rich cattle country formerly roamed over by cannibal tribes, linking with Bourail and Noumea the villages of Poya, Pouembout, Kone, Voh, Ouaco, Gomen, Koumac and the Tiebaghi Dôm, region which contains some of the world's richest chrome mines operated with British and American capital.

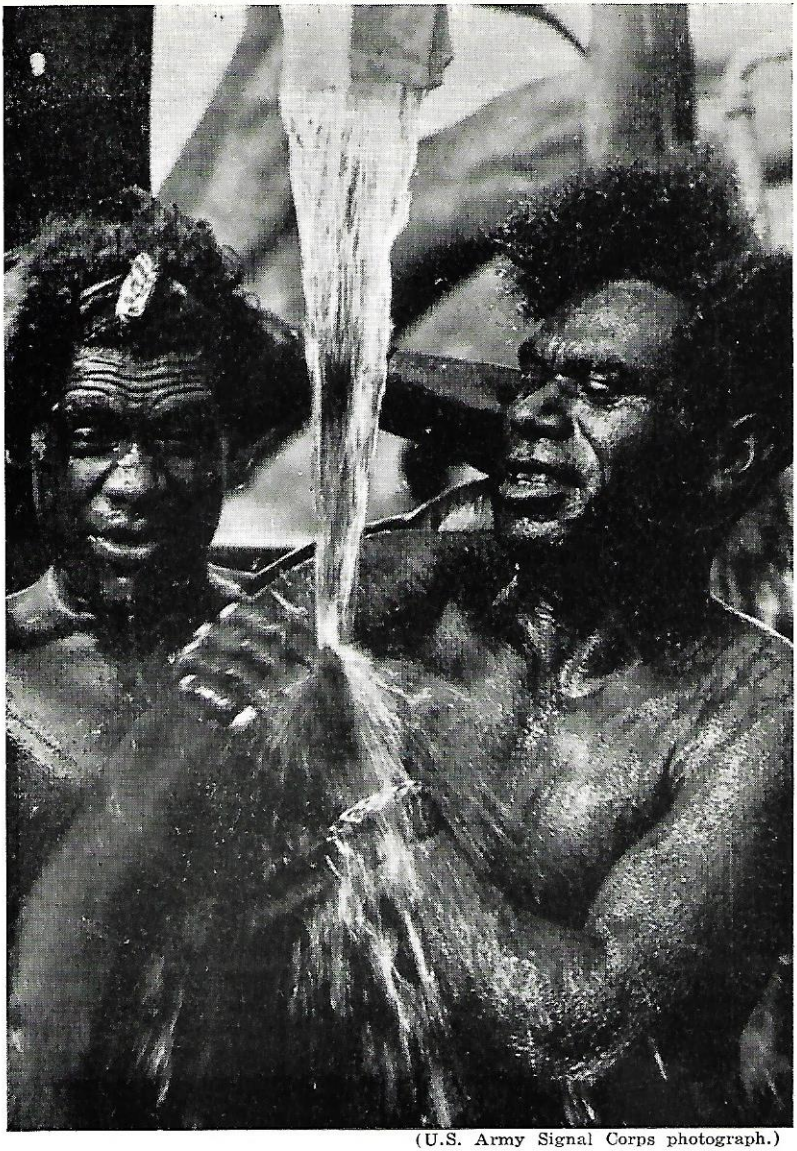
Back in the hills from Voh and Kone, and linked with the coast by narrow-gauge tramways, are the rich nickel

mines of the great international Société le Nickel, the ore going from here and from Thio on the east coast to feed the Point Doniambo smelters in Noumea. At Ouaco are the meat-works which normally supply the French Army and the Guiana penitentiary with its "singe," or canned meat, while coffee and maize are grown up the river valleys. So the colonists you meet up this coast to-day are miners and cattlemen and coffee planters.

Koné came into sad prominence in 1917, for it was from the nearby native settlement of Koniambo that bearded chief Noel started the last of the kanak revolts. The hut where Noel was treacherously murdered by a former friend, an Arab, for two thousand francs reward offered by the French, is still there, on the trail up towards the Chaine Centrale. The Arab cut off Noel's head and took it along to the local gendarme to claim his money. The head was set up at the crossroad as a warning of what happened to rebels.

But unlike the 1878 revolt, which has been the subject of more than one book, and to which the "Sydney Morning Herald" sent a special war correspondent, the later revolt received little mention in the outside world, probably on account of the first World War, also because for long Noumea lived in a sort of forgotten world of its own, miles, as the expression goes, behind the times. The whole amazing story needs writing, but not here.

Of the old chief Mango earlier mentioned, it is said that he had fitted his hut between Koné and Voh with a remarkably effective bodyguard. This was a nest of hornets hung in a sheaf of straw at the entrance. Any naked savage who carelessly brushed the straw in entering was liable to be attacked by the infuriated insects—a useful deterrent to anybody contemplating bursting into the hut to assassinate the occupants.



(U.S. Army Signal Corps photograph.)

It is a far cry to the days of which an old navigator speaks, when 80 human bodies might have been seen ready for the oven at one Loyalty village. To-day hundreds of Loyalty boys are working for the U.S. Army, which provides them with dining and recreation halls and army "tucker." Here Walok and Loen from Lifou are seen taking a shower at the end of a working day.

(U.S. Army Signal Corps photograph.)

Native youngsters of Maré interpreting an age-old fishing dance handed down from father to son. The one in front has thrown out his line and hooked a big fish which he is hauling in, encouraged and helped by those behind him. The second boy is waving a white cloth as bait to attract other fish.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE POUEBO OUTBREAK

A FRENCHMAN has estimated that in the first sixteen years of New Caledonia as a French colony seventy-two whites were killed and eaten by the blacks. Apparently he counted them from a list he compiled of their names. I believe the estimate to be too conservative, and that other Europeans must be regarded as "missing, believed killed."

The dangers that we have seen lurking beyond the town boundaries of Port de France repeated themselves at every beach and tribal village where the white man came to trade or to convert. The undercurrent of jealousy between trader and priest, French and English, made matters worse than they might have been, and led to the taking of sides in purely native wars.

The Marists eventually got a lion's share of what was going in the way of land and influence, because they became the eyes and ears of the French authorities, filling the same role that the English Protestant missions played for their country in Fiji, Tonga and other islands to the east. Places were bartered in heaven in exchange for substantial concessions on earth, and the mission and the blockhouse often grew up side by side, usually in well-selected spots on the banks of rivers suitable for coffee growing and agriculture, the nucleus for future white villages and settlements.

The natives eventually became ardent churchgoers, but at the same time their work-shy nature has remained unchanged, so that free colonists have had to rely for farm help mainly on ticket-of-leave men in the first place, and later on imported Javanese and Indo-Chinese labour, also engaging Japanese sometimes working on half shares. When the foreign white trader was forced out, the Japanese came in, and he for some mysterious reason was able to get credit from the big French stores where the small French trader could not, so that in the end he monopolised storekeeping in many areas, and obtained a strong hold on the commerce of Noumea. But let us return to the past.

In 1862 the Ouagap mission between Touho and Hienghene was burnt down, sheep and cattle killed and plantations devastated. Corpses of native converts were pulled out of their graves and turned into footballs or contemptuously stamped on by the heathen. This was the outcome of the death of Apengou, the once terrible chief whose attempts to exterminate the Touhos have already

been described.

Love can work miracles, even in the savage breast, and this Apengou in his later years was reformed by his favourite wife, a Catholic from Ouvea. She, when he was dying, made him promise to recommend the mission to his tribe and do what he could through his chiefly authority to obtain their conversion. In his anxiety to get to heaven, he ordered his people to frequent the church. This annoyed the recalcitrant among them, notably three wicked brothers and an uncle, who were conservative to the backbone. Had there been a kanak old school tie they would have worn it, for they were exceptionally bitter about Apengou's new-fangled ideas, not holding above all that women should be allowed to meddle in religious matters.

The names of these chiefly relatives were Pondaoulou or the Rowdy One, Aoutinedan or Rufus, Thiehou or the Fat, and Tiponhaka the Assassin—altogether a pretty bunch of boys and not a bit like Hiawatha. As soon as Apengou gave up the ghost, they called in their neighbouring pal, a chief called Kahoua, a declared priest-hater, and joined in attacks designed further to liquidate the unhappy Touhos. They went one better than Hitler and the Poles by not only killing their opponents but cooking and eating them, though in time their latent cannibalism may even lead the German race to that. In plain English, Apengou's relatives did a whole lot of harm before they were chased and captured, all four of them, then court-martialled and shot. Only Kahoua recanted, and by promising to become a Christian and an ally of the French, was pardoned with a caution.

The Pouébo massacres, in which nineteen whites lost their lives, came a year or two later. The best account of them has been left by Jules Patouillet, a French Navy doctor who arrived in the colony by the frigate "Néréide."

We have seen the Massacre Reef happenings lead to the establishment of a garrison at Gatopé on the west coast. Now attacks on the Touhos led to the construction of further blockhouses on the east.

The garrison of such out-of-the-way places was often strengthened by the enrolment of companies of local tirailleurs from the men of tribes of proven loyalty. Armed with European weapons and given a certain amount of training, they were found to be better adapted for bush warfare than the general run of white soldiery. These tirailleurs were known to French and native alike as "tayos fusils"—"armed fighters." Unfortunately their skill in warfare was more than matched by their cruelty. Their

European training and weapons made them nearly always invincible against their compatriots, and their savage bloodlust led them to spare neither man, woman, nor child. Although battles ended with their feasting on the bodies of the slain, the doctor says it was as useless as unwise to interfere—"We simply shut our eyes to things we were in no position to stop."

The bright tropical moon had risen about 9 p.m. one November evening when Brigadier Bailly and Venturine, another gendarme, set out for Oubatche from a hut they had been visiting six miles away. They ran bang into twelve hundred natives of Gabrick who seemed to be waiting for them. To the sound of the dreaded war cry they were speedily surrounded and killed. Leaving their mutilated bodies on the spot, the natives moved on to the homestead whence the gendarmes had come, that of a colonist named Demène. They killed him, cut the throat of his youngest born, a baby at the breast, and wounded Madame Demène and her two sons, who managed to run bleeding into the bush. One of these sons was afterwards employed at the Noumea post office, while the other settled in the New Hebrides and eventually died there. Descendants of the family are still living in Noumea.

Pushing on a further six miles highly pleased with their night's entertainment, the host was joined by the natives of També. After a get-together meeting they moved off to attack the Henry homestead on the coast at Ouagap. This Henry was a man of Paddon's stamp, a rich English trader and colonist who had spent many adventurous years in the New Hebrides before settling in New Caledonia. All through his life he had been in and out of danger, and on one occasion when his schooner had been cut off he had been forced to take shelter with a Protestant missionary on Mare. He had moved to New Caledonia from the Loyalties, and had quickly become one of the most enterprising and considerable of colonists, respected by everybody.

He had with him eighty Sandwich Islanders employed in cutting sandalwood. In the ensuing fight, four of these Hebrideans were killed and five or six wounded. Henry's eldest son, whom the colony knew in later years as "Tariki" Henry, was wounded. "Tariki" means chief, like the Maori "Ariki," and was a title bestowed in the first place by the kanaks. He was then a lad of fifteen, and on this occasion owed his life to his mother's courage. This gallant and invincible Scot had already hidden her other and smaller children in the family clothes press before sallying

out to battle on their behalf. She had seen her eldest son wounded at the palisade and ran to him, dragging him to safety.

The attack was beaten off, and the natives withdrew after pillaging the store of 60,000 francs worth of goods. The commander of the nearest garrison was informed and hastened along with twenty of his men, supported by thirty "tayos fusils" and six hundred native auxiliaries, to see what help they could give to the Henry family. They were joined by Dr. Patouillet and an officer named Krieger who died at Gatopé a year later.

The expedition burned the village of També, and killed a few of the natives they encountered, severing their heads from their bodies. After some sporadic fighting the rebels submitted, and by the time the governor arrived with the "Sibylle" and "Primauguet" bringing reinforcements, all that remained to do was to separate the guilty from the innocent, and to establish another permanent military post.

Charges were made that the nearby missionaries had encouraged the attack on the Henry home, or at any rate that they knew it was being planned and did nothing to discourage it or warn the family. These allegations were for years repeated in books and pamphlets published in Noumea. They were the subject of a long enquiry, to which Dr. Patouillet refers, but the damaging accusation was at length dropped officially for lack of evidence.

It appears that Hippolyte, chief of Pouébe, whose conversion has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, had been condemned by the French a few years before for disobedience and banished to the Isle of Pines, where he had died. One of his sisters had subsequently borne his head to Pouébo, it being kanak custom to screw off the skull from the body a few months after burial, and to place it in the family skull burial ground. It was now alleged that a priest named Père Villard used to show this skull to the natives to excite them to revenge themselves for Hippolyte's banishment. This priest was accused of having learnt of the projected attack on the Henry home from an accomplice, and to have received a valuable jade axe from the blacks as the price of his silence.

The responsibility of certain natives for the outbreak having been fully established, the guillotine was brought from Noumea and set up on Pouébo beach, for with the advance of civilisation it was felt that firing parties were getting out-of-date. It was a new sensation for the natives to see the bushy black heads of their compatriots roll

grinning on the sands. Unfortunately the lesson was not so lasting as the French had hoped.

The lieutenant charged with building the new blockhouse pressed the local tayos into his service, but they never really took a liking to the work, nor to his way of giving orders. This may be why, when at the end of a year he sent six white soldiers along to a village to recruit a new gang, they not only met with a blank refusal but were themselves attacked, killed and eaten. The flame of revolt again spread through the countryside, the next to share their fate being a coastal settler named Antonio.

Of course this meant another punitive expedition. The troops were given carte blanche; they could go where they liked with licence to kill anybody who looked ferocious. A further military post was established on the right bank of the mosquito-haunted Diahot at a place called Bondé. Some of the fighting took place round here, and one day portion of the tiny garrison was surprised by a maliciously lit bush fire, and had two of their number grilled to death. The Bondé post lasted until 1871, when it lost its importance and was suppressed.

It took many weary months to tame the revolted tribes, which on submission forfeited their lands. Still another blockhouse was established alongside the Henry homestead garrisoned by fifty soldiers and sixty convicts, so there was enough strength locally to quash incipient revolt, and the conquest of the north had advanced another stage.

As usual, the French accused grand chief Gondou of being an accomplice of the Pouébo rebels. The commander of the Ouagap garrison, tired of waiting two years for orders to apprehend him, decided to take matters into his own hands. He heard of the savage's whereabouts from a native informer, and at the head of his "tayos fusils" and a few hundred Ounouas, caught him one fine night in a lonely hut in the bush. Gondou only had one of his wives and two old takatas or witch-doctors with him. He was speedily hacked to bits and made grilled steak of by the Ounouas.

The Poindis tried to continue the struggle but the sting had been taken out of their tail and their vengeance only manifested itself in occasional destructive fires and the murder of one or two loyal blacks. Order was restored with their submission, and the colony breathed more freely. The next few years were to be troubled by a few outbreaks in other areas, like those of Bourail and Huailu, but these were successfully localised. It was as if the natives were taking a breather, saving themselves up for their supreme

act of defiance, the revolt of 1878.

Gondou's death brings us to April, 1869, so the old villain had had a good run for his money. His eventually submissive subjects revealed that their chief had often killed among his own people merely to satisfy his blood lust and cannibal appetite. His court butcher was named Gemmi, and the indiscriminate manner in which he chose his victims made him universally feared. He would waylay people along the village pathways and bash their heads in without warning, and when anybody asked him "Why did you kill my father, or my cousin, or my aunt?" his grunted reply was "Chief's orders." Sometimes he used a European axe and sometimes a native tomahawk for his executions.

A native condemned by tribal laws was usually strangled. Sometimes a powerful tribe would surround the village of one less powerful and take a convicted man under its "protection." His fate would be communicated to him in the form of a piece of fibre rope with a slipknot in which was fixed a stone and a piece of bamboo. The slipknot meant he was to be strangled, the bamboo that his body would be cut in strips, and the stone that the strips would be cooked in a native oven. A guard was placed round the place where the unhappy man had taken refuge, and should he imprudently venture forth he was immediately seized and the sentence carried out. Georges Baudoux has made fine use of this curious custom in the magnificent short story, "Le Tayo Gras" ("The Fat Man").

Dr. Patouillet got hold of one of these slipknot tokens —"tillets" the natives called them—in the following manner. The man who betrayed Gondou to the French was a tayo named Amboa, whose brother had been eaten by the grand chief. The survivors of Gondou's tribe tried to get hold of this traitor, but he took refuge among the Ounouas, so they sent him the tillet instead. It was a virtual sentence of death, but one never carried out, because of the peace imposed by the French.

Of the first of the Pouébo incidents, when Brigadier Bailly and the other gendarme were murdered, it is related that a chief named Napoleon rewarded the two natives who struck the fatal blows with an axe shaped like a fish's tail.

The natives of some areas used in times of scarcity to eat a greenish-white clay, a silicate of magnesia containing a little copper and called by them payoté. It cannot have been very nourishing, but no doubt gave the momentary illusion of a full stomach. In hard times there was also a good deal of infanticide, and persons who, for reasons

of age or health, became useless to the tribe, were exposed in the bush without resources or the right of appeal.

But life is tenacious. A native named Bechin belonging to Canala—haunt of grand chiefs Gelima and Aliki-Kai—suffered from muscular paralysis of the stomach and was a burden to his people. So they carried him to their cemetery on the Pic-des-Morts, and on this barren height left him to the crows. It was the second occasion they had done this, and for a second time he dragged himself back. It took him three days, dragging himself down desolate slope and across waterlogged flats, to reach his village, and then only French intervention saved him from a third exposure.

Sometimes the person sentenced for uselessness was taken out beyond the reef and heaved into the deep water, playground of sharks. In 1869 the Ouagap gendarme sent a native named Moneo as prisoner to Noumea, charged with intent to drown his own mother. But he had to be freed when the old lady declared she was a willing accomplice in her own end, and had helped her son in getting ready the canoe which took them out to the reef. For the life of them other natives could not see what the white man found revolting in such an act.

An example of native cunning comes from a place called Tiamodou, where the remains of an old chief of Tillet (place name, not slipknot) were buried in a cave. This chief had in 1858 pillaged an English ship at Congouma. When at the point of death he pretended he was being devoured by the spirits of the whites he had murdered, which he said had taken refuge in the stolen booty. The witch-doctor ordained that, to keep this danger from others, the chief should be buried in the sacked ship's sea-chest, together with his ill-gotten gains. However, when some years later Dr. Patouillet visited the grotto in the hope of getting hold of a few native souvenirs, he found nothing but the worm-eaten sea-chest and a heap of bleached bones.

"To all my questions about the disappearance of the old chief's riches," he writes, "the witch-doctor's explanation was that the spirits of the white men had come and taken back what belonged to them." The doctor adds that the old scoundrel looked at him without even batting an eyelid.

Chapter XIX.

DEATH FESTIVALS

THE strangling or immolation of female relatives, like the practice known as suttee in India—whence in prehistoric times the Melanesians came to the Pacific—has already been mentioned in connection with the death of Matamoé, Watton's son. A case is reported near Ouagap in 1867, when on the death of the chief of Kokingoné his mother remained seven days without food in spite of the prayers of her relatives. At the end of that time, not feeling anything like dead, she stabbed herself mortally with a wooden stake hardened in the fire.

Dr. Patouillet was guest at two native death festivals. The first was at Ouagap following the death of Outé (Rain), daughter of chief Ailé. Following the all-night wailing of Tionkay, the child's mother and the chief's second wife, and her retinue of women, the tribesmen at dawn rushed out of their huts at the voice of a warrior crying "igaou." A hut was built for the corpse inside of which a damp wood fire was kept going. Yams were gathered for the wake and a huge throng came along bearing poles decorated with vines and tabous, the women bringing straw and niaouli bark.

The body was borne into the hut and at the sounding of a conch shell spears were thrown at the twenty-nine chief mourners or guardian tayos, who ran off into the bush and manufactured melon-shaped hats for themselves with enormous brims made from sarsaparilla fibre and tree fern. These were so light that the men had to hold them on their heads with their hands. On top of each was a little tabou model of a hut adorned with a tillet. Women were not allowed near these hat-wearers, who sometimes blew their conches to warn intruders away. A double blast was the signal to bring them food.

When the big day arrived, guests were made to hide in the bush close to a big enclosure where the grass had been carefully plucked. At the blast on the shell, men armed with spears and blackened from head to foot ran about in all directions with straw torches. The big hat mourners followed, whose duty it was to burn the likewise blackened corpse. White emblems hung from their left arms, their waists were enfolded with vinestems, and with both hands they held on their hats. As they passed the chief one uttered the shrill battle-cry "Din! Din! Aka-

tika!"

The mourners went into their peculiar dance, during which the witch-doctor made a speech, finally presenting the chief with Caledonian shell money regarded as consolation for Outé's death. At night the big hats planted bamboos and tree fern leaves on the marge of river and sea, and for a week thereafter only they had the privilege of bathing there. The women had to stay away from the village for a month.

Guests who had arrived late were received next morning; they brought bracelets and other gifts. Towards midday a troup of men started calling out to the invisible big hats and warriors went out looking for them, presently leading them in and pretending to protect them from the furious assaults of the others. A few spears were thrown during this sham fight, after which the mourners beat a retreat while their assailants tried to snatch off their headgear. This they doffed on retreating to the tribal enclosure, hanging them on the hut supports. They next emerged with reeds in their hands, their heads covered with black tillets and crowns of leaves. Slowly they advanced towards the chief who handed them pearl money, reward for the days they had spent banished in the bush.

The wake ended with a yam feast and a pilou before the dead girl's hut, which henceforth was taboo. Round a long pole adorned with a tillet, the old men and women were the first to commence their slow monotonous nasal chanting, accompanied by weird and savage whistling and the muffled beat of clappers. Gradually the younger men, the tayos, coming in from all parts with their women and children, began to get the rhythm into their bones, until presently all were merged into a shapeless gyrating mass of humanity, moving quicker and quicker round the post, above their maddened heads a forest of spears, tomahawks and torches moving in frantic agitation. Their tirelessness was amazing; what one sees to-day in Noumea's public square on the fourteenth of July, the modern kanak's one night of licence, is but an echo of the savagery of the past.

The mourners, the tabou tayos, were obliged to wear their hats until the mourning period came to an end, which in the case of a grand chief might be for several years. During this period they were not allowed to cut their hair. Not many years ago it was not uncommon to come across natives with enormous fuzzy mops one or two feet high. When questioned they would give the reason, "Papa dead," or "Mama dead." But the manner in which such a head of hair collected lice and dirt may be imagined.

The second death commemoration attended by the doctor took him across the Central Chain to Gatopé on the west coast. He was accompanied by a lieutenant and ten soldiers, twenty-five native tirailleurs and four or five hundred east coast tribesmen. They followed an old trail and had to cross one mountain torrent forty-seven times. As our Australian, New Zealand and American troops have learnt, the Caledonian bush is not always easy going.

Two years before, the Ounouas had lost grand chief Dongo, Gondou's sworn enemy, and since then the tabou tayos had worn their big mourning hats. Now the great yam harvest had come, and they were preparing to abandon their headgear in the course of a last great festival in honour of their departed leader. Days, even weeks before, messengers had been sent out with invitations to other tribes.

The party were halted on the foothills of the western slopes admiring the magnificent landscape when two Ounoua warriors arrived and introduced themselves as guides. Gifts were got ready and their bearers placed in the van. The newcomers requested them to announce their approach to Dongo's village by firing a volley.

Arrived at the village square the party was welcomed in a long speech, punctuated by shots, yells and dances. The reception lasted all day, for tribes were still arriving. The Kahoueus came in fresh, prancing before their hosts and striking the steel of their axes against the shaft of their spears—they had not come far. In contrast the tired Touaourous, who had come from the far south, were subdued, defiling slowly and sitting down to make their speeches. The Hienghene party made a great show, pounding the earth with their feet and whistling that maddening infectious whistle of the pilou-drunk kanak while their sorcerer yelled compliments to their hosts.

A gunshot about 5 p.m. was the signal for the whole mob to rush headlong towards the dead chief's hut. At the head were a score of Dongo's official mourners, the big hats. In two and a half years their hair had escaped from beneath its binding and now meshed down over their shoulders almost to their loins. Their bodies were blackened from head to foot with charcoal made from the candlenut tree, so they had the appearance of athletes clad in shimmering black satin.

Dongo's successor commenced the yam distribution, and this over, the women started a pilou which would only cease with the rising of the sun. Even then most of the natives did not seek repose, but rushed to the village green

to witness an extraordinary dance, "a real dance," says the doctor, "the only one worthy of the name that ever I saw in New Caledonia."

The Ounoua tayos had formed a group before their great meeting hut, and were intoning a monotonous chant, when there appeared at the extremity of the open space a figure which would strike any white beholder as the apotheosis of savagery. This was the leader of the corps de ballet. He was covered with the enormous Caledonian war mask or Apouema. Below a crowning dome like a British guardsman's busby bulged a huge face of coconut palm wood with curved nose and eyes indicated by carving but without aperture. It was through the enormous gaping mouth that the wearer was expected to observe what was going on. The chin was adorned with a horrid mane of human hair, and from the mask fell over the shoulders a longish network-like dress without armlets which ended about the middle of the wearer's thighs. Something in the manner of the Maori's feather wearing mat, each knot of this dress had its tuft of feather of the notou pigeon, the effect being fleece-like.

The masked man made his entry walking backwards, facing and threatening with his spear a party of thirty tayos armed with small coconut fibre brooms. In turn they were followed by a larger party each wearing a tillet consisting of a bundle of straw in which was enclosed Caledonian pearl-shaped money intended as presents for the more influential guests.

The men with the brooms were the actual ballet. At their entry they were hiding their faces behind banana leaves; then they squatted on their haunches in three rows at a spot where all might see them. The sorcerer next appeared, led by the Apouema or mask-wearer, who placed him beside the dancers. On the way he played pranks on his assistants. The witch-doctor carried an enormous bundle of straw containing wet ashes. He liberally sprinkled the dancers, still crouched on their hams, with these, to the great glee of the Apouema, who manifested his satisfaction with a liberal distribution of blows from a small cane on the heads of those within reach. This ceremony recalled the burning of Dongo's huts at the time of his death, when custom exacted that nothing remain but the ashes, wet with the tears of the women.

When the dancers had been sufficiently sprinkled, the takata threw his straw bundle at the feet of one of Dongo's close relatives. Then he presented a coconut to one of the tayos who instantly pierced it with his spear. This recalled

the destruction of coconut trees at the time of the funeral.

These rites ended, the masked leader started to murmur a kind of chant which was taken up all round, the troupe accompanying their own movements by whistling and by executing with their feet and with their brooms a regular ballet measure, remarkable in such a setting. This consisted of five slow paces followed by five quicker ones. To each alteration of the leader's crooning, the hands of the dancers changed time and position, always in perfect unison—the sort of unison the Maori girls of New Zealand achieve in their graceful poi dance.

This dance lasted for fifteen or twenty minutes. Sometimes it simulated the planting and cultivation and harvesting of yams, sometimes the episode of some war or other incident of significance in tribal life. Finally the breathless figures broke off and went to bathe, leaving the arena to the women. These paraded before the chief carrying native tomahawks in their right hands. They pretended to strike at an imaginary enemy. In their left hands were mother of pearl knives with which they seemed to address greetings to the onlookers. To end the feast, men and women dancers came forward to receive gifts of Caledonian money.

Other detailed descriptions of native death cults are contained in Père Lambert's "Moeurs et Superstitions des Neo-Caledoniens," a book now hard to obtain. He writes particularly of the Belep islanders, among whom he lived in 1850.

At death the body was buried in a sitting position in mountain or thicket, and a year later the solemn ceremony of ouaré mat took place. The skull was taken to the family cemetery of skulls, not far from the paternal hut.

The Pott islanders had a paradise known as the Tsiabiloum, presided over by a god named Doibat. It was an underwater country of great fertility and beauty, full of yams and taros, sugar cane, bananas and wild oranges, and was to the north-east of the isle. There the dead gave themselves up to the joys which figure largest in the savage mind. On the way thither souls were caught in the net of a giant Cerberus named Kiémoua, who submitted them to all sorts of ill-treatment before allowing them to continue on their way. The dead only passed their nights in Tsiabiloum; during the day they returned to the tribal cemeteries, where the living were obliged to honour them.

Père Lambert describes the pilou-ten, or solemn dance which brought the death festivals of a chief to an end. This dance, he says, varied from village to village. In one

it was called aout, the wave, representing the ebb and flow of the sea; another village mimed the swaying of trees under the force of tsiaouna, the cyclone; elsewhere the theme was fishing, with the movements of the fisherman and the darting of fish in and out of his net; in yet another place you would see the flight of birds imitated—symbolism not without its poetry, showing how close the kanak lived to the nature around him, and how well able, from close observation, he was to give expression to the primary joys and sorrows and activities of life, from the birth of the child to the death of the old man, with proper attention to the more important occupations such as hunting, fishing, warfare, exchange of visits, and so on.

On the day of burial, while relatives burnt their arms and chests and lacerated their ear-lobes, and while the dead man's hut, goods and coconut grove went up in smoke, the body was borne off slung on a pole, the grave-diggers following the two bearers, adorned with foliage headgear, with the mourners howling behind. It was the grave-diggers' duty to fast for four or five days alongside the corpse, not a pleasant undertaking although they were allowed to stuff fragrant herbs into their nostrils. The pouanangates, men charged with the guardianship of the dead, wore their hair done up in a huge pyramid until the lengthy mourning period was over and had a whole succession of formalities to attend to.

The priest gives a description of the Ki, or mock fighting which he witnessed, and the dance and distribution of gifts that followed. A Nian, or congress in honour of the greatest chiefs, might take place two, three, even as long as ten years after his death. It was a matter of long preparation; entire forests might be cleared to plant yams for the celebrations, and an entirely new village built, with huts of enormous size. Last to arrive amid great excitement would be the tribe to which the mother of the dead chief had belonged. It was they who provided the first human victims, often from among their own offspring, choice falling on those of humblest condition.

These late comers were licensed to burn and destroy huts, coconut trees, breadfruit trees, plantations after they had entered their host's territory. Père Gagniere declared it was like seeing a torrent burst its banks, causing in its passage destruction and death. This was called Diéoudo, or honouring the dead, and it was the right thing to applaud it, but sometimes the proprietary tribe thought the destruction had gone far enough, and indicated that the destruction "hardly gave them pleasure." The visitors would then

grow more circumspect, their moderation increasing as they approached the tribal arena. They would then burn only huts of the least importance, slash at trees that were useless and leave the plantations severely alone. Otherwise quarrels might break out which would end the pilou in bloodshed almost before it had started.

The reception rose to a climax as the bearers raised the limbs of their human victims, exhibiting them to the hungry gaze of the assembly which redoubled its yelling. Among native Caledonians every gift, no matter of what nature, demanded the return of an object of similar value. So the host tribe immediately knocked on the head a similar number of unfortunates from an unpopular or outlying village. Common decency insisted that the fete be prolonged as long as possible, until the tribe bearing the brunt of the entertainment was eaten out of house and home.

Alongside these goings on was the ever-present need to guard against sudden treachery, for which reason visiting tribes preferred to sleep at a respectable distance one from the other. Sometimes war was announced with the sunrise, stones whistling through the air like bullets across no-man's-land. Tribes might abstain from participating in the pilou, merely awaiting with impatience the distribution of gifts which followed, after which they would make for their homes as quick as their legs would carry them and heaven help the hindmost.

The end of the festivities was the dreaded moment of tension. Excited tribes approached one another holding their weapons in their hands in case of need, women, children and old men in the background ready to flee at the first alarm. The merest trifle, the fall almost of a leaf or a man tripping over a strand or vine, might be the signal for stampede and the outbreak of a bloody war. From all sides would then arise the sinister cry "gouné! gouné! gouné!" the kanak's "sauve qui peut." Thus, in treachery and bloodshed, terminated the majority of the great Nians.

Chapter XX.

BLOODSHED IN THE LOYALTIES

ELEVEN years elapsed after Admiral Febvrier Despointes broke the French flag over the soil of New Caledonia before the same country took effective possession of the outlying Loyalty Islands, lying parallel with and fifty miles off the Caledonian east coast. Occupation was not achieved without considerable bloodshed.

Geography, religion and native character have a lot to do with what happened; also the mistrust of French Catholic for English Protestant and of English Protestant for French Catholic. In reading what follows it must be borne in mind that these islands, Lifou, Maré and Ouvea, are more densely populated than the mainland, and that the natives, without being less quarrelsome, were quickly found to be more intelligent, more energetic and more civilisable.

Since 1827 the group had been frequented by trading vessels, mostly from Sydney, though American whalers and trepang fishers also called there, and sometimes the islanders were recruited as sailors. Much confusion arose among seafaring men from the erroneous reckoning of some sandalwood vessels in 1841-42, who trusting to their defective longitudes, announced some of the group, before known, as new discoveries.

The London Missionary Society followed up the three Samoan lay brothers Tataio, Taniela and Fao, brought by the "Camden" in 1840, with English Protestant missionaries who quickly succeeded in abolishing cannibalism (the islands being vastly easier to supervise than the Caledonian mainland), and in transforming the people into zealous and God-fearing churchgoers. Bishop Selwyn of New Zealand, visiting there with H.M.S. "Havannah" in 1849, was able to report favourably on the work that was going on. The missionaries were teaching the people many a useful trade, and the islands seem to have been prosperous and contented, if humourlessly over-zealous in the prayer meeting and psalm singing sense, under their management.

The French had their hands so full on the mainland that for a decade they hardly gave the Loyalties a thought; then one day the governor woke up to the fact that the French flag had never been hoisted there, and that there was no official French resident or other sign of French dominion. The group might be called neutral territory and

the first-comers, the English Protestants, were running it to their own satisfaction, teaching their converts to look upon it as a future British protectorate. At Chépénéhé, chief port and village of Lifou, pastor Macfarlane used to hoist the British flag every Sunday before his residence, which had become the centre of the island's life, and the same flag flew over the huts of the principal chiefs.

Yet it is only natural that, as New Caledonia came under control, the French should begin to cast their eyes across the narrow waters, and to maintain that Admiral Febvrier Despointes and Tardy de Montravel had intended its inclusion when French sovereignty was declared over the mainland. The first hint that English Protestant rule would not continue unmolested came in March, 1856, when Major Testard took the title of "troop commander of New Caledonia and the Loyalties," and forbade the unlicensed importation of arms and ammunition into the group. In 1860, his successor, Major Durand, authorised the Australian trader H. Burns to export arms from his Ouvea depot, and to continue trading between the group and Fiji and the New Hebrides.

There were then very few Catholic converts. Sent over in 1857, the Marist Père Fabre had tried to gain ground but in vain. Complaints reached the governor in Noumea that the Catholic missionaries were poorly lodged while the Protestant pastors owned fine houses; to their insignificant little churches came only naked down-and-outs while the large Protestant temples were filled with well-dressed, well-fed kanaks of both sexes lifting up their voices in magnificent choral singing. Furthermore in lesser villages throughout the group Samoan lay brothers were spreading the Protestant gospel, while the French priests were almost without helpers. An even more serious thing from Governor Guillain's political point of view, was that schools were being organised by the English and conducted, like the Protestant services, in the native dialects and in English instead of French.

Typical of the stories that reached Noumea was one of a French captain who landed one Sabbath in righteous Chépénéhé. There Macfarlane's zealots stopped him and wanted to know why he was promenading about instead of being in church praying. He replied that he was damned if he would go to church except when he wanted to, and anyway he was a Catholic. His reply did not please the Sunday police, who made some show of tying him to a tree so that the righteous could mock at him as they came out of church.

Exaggerated as this story may well be, it at least suggests that French nationals were being subjected to vexatious treatment in islands which the French needed to round off their New Caledonian possessions. Efforts were made to blacken Macfarlane's character, but without much success, for apart from over-zealousness there was little to be said against and much to be said for his work among the natives.

The main charge levelled against him was that he had married the daughter of an Irishman named Hennessey to a native chief named Aima. Noumea made out that trader Hennessey "sold" his daughter to the chief for a house and a load of copra. Garnier, who visited the isle about 1866, says: "A minor chief of Lifou had, through the good offices of the Protestant missionary, M. Mac-F . . ., asked in marriage a poor English girl, Miss Mary H . . ., whose parents handed her over in exchange for a house and a quantity of yams. Later the 'sellers' sought through the French courts to have this union annulled, asking for the return of their daughter; but she was so attached to her husband that she refused to leave him. For his part this chief was much taken with Miss Mary, of whom he was proud and whom he treated perfectly well."

Mary had two sons by her chief, and lived with him for several years. Until his dying day old Hennessey, who settled in Noumea, denied that he had "sold" his daughter. Mary came to New Caledonia at a later date and took up with a German named Schwob; and her third and last husband was an Algerian Jew named Meyerdahan. She finally died in Noumea during a plague epidemic.

By 1862 Governor Guillain, a captain in the French Navy, decided it was high time to intervene in the Loyalties. Before taking the final step he got in touch with the Minister for the Colonies, who agreed with him that effective control should be extended to the group. The Minister added: "Before taking possession of these islands you will do well to find out if the English have not hoisted their flag officially and signed a treaty with the natives recognising British sovereignty or a protectorate. Refer to me if you find anything of this sort has taken place and await my instructions. But I have every reason for believing that you will find the coast clear."

The governor found the coast clear and embarked his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant E. Bourgey (later colonel and troop commander in Noumea) on the "Fulton" with thirty soldiers. Their reception was distinctly chilly. They landed at Lifou on 1st May, 1864, and camped between

Caledonian witch doctor's mask.

Hiacho, where Père Fabre toiled, and Chépénéhé, Macfarlane's headquarters.

A message was sent to Macfarlane forbidding him to hold native schools unless he first got the authorisation of the French Government in New Caledonia. The French officer quickly got in touch with the Marist priest who was receiving information from a Catholic convert of what was passing in the Protestant camp.

The Chépénéhé natives were requested to help the soldiers build temporary mud huts, but refused, and gathered on the beach to the number of fifteen hundred, with weapons in their hands. Macfarlane, whose dislike of the French showed itself in his general attitude rather than in any act of open hostility, was sent for, and arrived accompanied by five or six hundred of his supporters. He was told to approach alone, and in the course of a meeting with the lieutenant denied personal responsibility for the natives' hostility. He was ordered to see that the Chépénéhé crowd dispersed within twenty-four hours, but pleaded that he was not in a position to do so, being a missionary and not their grand chief. Next day the soldiers heard the inhabitants firing off their guns before Macfarlane's house, but the day after most of them had dispersed.

The soldiers remained encamped for forty-five days awaiting support from Noumea. It was a long and patient watch, and they ran out of food, which the Protestants refused to sell them, when relief appeared in the shape of the "Fulton" and another man-o'-war, the "Coetlogon." The governor was there in person, bringing infantry and artillery reinforcements and sailors from the "Iphigénie," which had just reached Noumea from Toulon with a first consignment of two hundred and fifty convicts to start the New Caledonian penitentiary.

The governor sent for the chiefs and principal natives of Chépénéhé, wishing to harangue and warn them that they would do well to submit to French authority and avoid bloodshed; but they refused to appear. This was treated as a declaration of war, and the main body of troops were ordered to storm the village. At the same time a lesser force of a hundred and fifty white soldiers were landed on the other side of the island with orders to march across to Chépénéhé, crushing all opposition met with en route.

With a force of fifty infantrymen Lieutenant Bourgey made a frontal attack on Chépénéhé, while Lieutenant Angles led a flank attack with forty of the military incorrigibles or "disciplinaires," dressed in their baggy Zouave trousers with big red cummerbunds. The frontal

attack was with the bayonet which the natives met bravely with what arms they had; but the flank attack disorganised them and their resistance broke. "They ran for it, jumping our bayonets like veritable monkeys," wrote Bourgey in his report to Public Prosecutor Paul Cordeil.

Native dead numbered fifteen or twenty and the wounded sixty including some women and children; while the French had eleven wounded. A hundred and eighty natives were captured and bound with native vines. Among them was a man of remarkable physical strength named Sailaka, who had sworn to cut off the lieutenant's head. Instead the Frenchman had the satisfaction of capturing him and seeing him bound. Later Governor Guillain appointed him public flogger and executioner at Ile Nou, a job he carried out so efficiently that he had to be transferred to a less congenial occupation.

At about nine o'clock the same morning the Chépénéhé men in retreat ran back into the other column crossing from the other side of the island, and a bitter fight ensued. The French were as surprised as the natives, but formed the regulation square, and a succession of volleys resulted in the death or maiming of another fifty natives. In the ensuing days Lieutenant Bourgey took a hundred and fifty men with him and hunted hostile Lifouans from pillar to post, until in the end they lost the will to resist. A few French soldiers were killed and wounded, but native losses were not light.

The act of submission by the two Protestant grand chiefs allowed the governor to leave a garrison of a hundred soldiers and return to Noumea, taking several hundred prisoners with him. The English missionaries bitterly protested to their home Government against French "outrages" and "aggression," and demanded to be indemnified for damage caused, but a deaf ear was turned to their protestations.

Lieutenant Bourgey swears to the accuracy of his account of the subjugation of Lifou, which I have followed. Garnier, visiting there a year or two later, adds the interesting and very believable comment that the natives on both sides were persuaded that the French had come to exterminate the Protestants and protect the Catholics. This irrational belief was so firmly held that those of the former sect fled from the soldiers with dread, while the Catholics went to their camp with complete confidence and enlisted with them as allies. The revoltees "put up a pretty good resistance for people so poorly armed."

Lifou possesses some curious limestone caves. Near

one of these Garnier was shown a place where a French soldier had been killed and others wounded. A white man who had been with the punitive expedition related how in one seemingly deserted village he entered a hut with the idea of getting a drink of water, when he came on a big savage brandishing an axe over the corpse of an old man whom he had just brained. "That's what we do to Protestants!" he yelled as he ran off to look for other heretics to slaughter.

Although nominally of religious origin, tribal differences were actually at the bottom of many a Loyalty Island dispute. This was because tribes and villages would become converted holus-bolus either to Protestantism or Catholicism, and then old feuds would be carried on under the new guise of religion. Grand chief Boula, ruler of the southern portion, was a Protestant and so was grand chief Zeoula of Gaatcha; while chief Okenesseu of the central portion was a Catholic.

Lifou, the largest island, is only forty miles long by twenty broad, and inhabited by six thousand three hundred persons, of whom in 1890 five thousand two hundred were given as Protestants and one thousand one hundred Catholic. In modern times the existence of rival churches on all the Loyalty islands is found to have a beneficial effect, for the people are much more alive and vigorous and independent and much more retentive of life-giving tribal crafts and customs than are those of, say, the Isle of Pines where the remnant of a once fairly numerous tribe is from cradle to grave completely dominated by one ruling church.

The idea of property is strongly developed in the Loyalties, and in the old days a question of fishing rights, or the ownership of a quite unimportant parcel of land, often led to heated discussion and then to pitched battles. Many years after Lifou saw quiet restored, Maré was disturbed by such quarrels, and missionaries and priests and sometimes the administration had to intervene. Maré, richer but smaller than Lifou (twenty-two by twenty miles), is split up among six main tribes and many more villages containing (1890) two thousand seven hunded and forty-seven Protestants and eight hundred and ninety-eight Catholics.

A black incident occurred in 1881, when one tribe attacked and murdered twenty-four members of another tribe over a land dispute. Thirteen of the victims were male children whose brains were dashed out on the wayside. Huts were burnt and plantations destroyed. The aggressors on this occasion called themselves Protestants

and the victims Catholics, but to label the affair religious warfare would not be entirely accurate. Chief Lali, regent of the island during the minority of the young grand chief, with some lesser chiefs and their warriors, were exiled to an island named Poulo-Condor as a result of this massacre. Most died in exile.

Some French tried to blame the Protestant missionary, Mr. Jones, and the governor sent a boatload of soldiers to have him arrested and brought to Noumea, where the local newspaper labelled him "the English Tartuffe." Actually he was an honest and upright man who had taught the Maréans many a useful trade, and his going was keenly regretted. He was expelled to Australia. Chief Naisseline recently mentioned his name to me as a fine character whom the people still admired.

Of course his expulsion was a political move, a continuation of the policy followed in Lifou, and after his going the English were replaced by French Protestant missionaries, who have done and still do excellent service both in the Loyalties and New Caledonia. In May, 1884, an administrative decree obliged all schools in the tiny group either to teach the French language or to close down. "All schools conducted in the English or Maréan languages operating in localities where French schools have been established must close from this day," ran Article 8.

On the whole, and though at the time it may have seemed bitterly unfair to the English Protestant missionaries, the replacement of a preponderant English influence by French in the Loyalties was needed to stabilise the situation and put an end to fratricidal disputes. To-day the French wisely leave the tribes to govern themselves according to native custom; white people are unable to visit the islands without official permission from Noumea, and, with only one not very important exception to my knowledge, the people of the two different and rival Christian faiths associate happily together for the common good—"fraternise" would be a better word—without thought of "old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago."

Major John Cotton, a medical officer with the United States Army, who recently led a goodwill mission to the Loyalties, came back to New Caledonia highly impressed by the spirit and vigour of these people who have not been made to sacrifice their native dances and their native ways, and who have contributed liberally, both in soldiers, sailors and also in money to the cause of Fighting France. He was particularly enthusiastic about the administration of Maré under Naisseline's over-lordship and describes this

grand chief as altogether a remarkable man.

Summing up, the French claim to the Loyalties was just as natural as New Zealand's claim to the Chatham Islands. What street fighting one sees in Noumea to-day between Loyalty Islanders who come here to work, is not between factions from the same island, but Maré and Lifou boys showing off on Sunday afternoons before their womenfolk, who are also showing off their feminine charms, set off or to some extent concealed, by the brightness of their Mother Hubbard dresses.

Ouvea, smallest of the larger islands, has not been mentioned because tribal wars there seem to have been relatively fewer and less bloodthirsty. It is the islanders of the northern half who descend from the Wallis Island Ouveans; while the southerners, of a different and milder race, were in historic times (1850 or so) conquered by a New Caledonian chief named Whiningay. The English once called Fayaoué, where the French resident, usually a medical officer, lives, Sandalwood Wells.

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Kone
Pouembout
Poherihouta
Mueo
Poya
Houailou
Bourail
Nakety
Thio
Bouloupari
Tomo
Paita
Yate
Dumbea
St Louis
Plum
Goro
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NEW CALEDONIA

internationally famed novelist, since banned by the Nazis. Fruit of this stay was the English edition of the Reischek diaries, **Yesterdays in Maoriland,** which he discovered, translated and edited in Berlin for Jonathan Cape's "Life and Letters" series. The welcome given to this book is summed up by "The Times Literary Supplement" in the words: "Mr. Priday has placed under a deep obligation all interested in New Zealand." Then followed three years as London film critic and seven in Perth as senior grade reporter with the "West Australian" and editor of the "Broadcaster" radio weekly. After holiday visits to Sydney and New Zealand, he came on to Noumea a week before the outbreak of the present war to watch the trial flight of the first Pan-American clipper, and has since acted as Noumea correspondent for some of the best known Australian and New Zealand newspapers and for world-famed news agencies. He is now a Washington accredited war correspondent. Besides the present book, he has written a substantial novel about New Caledonia, where a $4\frac{1}{2}$ years' stay gives him a total 17 years' experience on the shores of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. He plans in a subsequent book to continue the exciting story of Caledonian settlement through the great age of transportation, mining development and the kanak revolt.

CANNIBAL ISLAND

THE war has thrown a searchlight on New Caledonia, one of the largest of Pacific Islands, formerly as unknown as Tristan da Cunha. To-day its Chaine Centrale, resembling the Sierras as one approaches California, has become a familiar sight to hundreds of thousands of American, Australian and New Zealand fighting men. And what a story it has to tell, this land which has been a byword among mariners for the danger of its coral reefs, for the ferocity of its head-hunting cannibals, as a hell for French convicts, and then, in the "roaring eighties," as the home of a raucous mining community drawn from all quarters of the globe! It is a story that in Mr. H. E. L. Priday finds an ideal raconteur, for he has spent his life in two worlds, the one represented by Picadilly, Montmartre and the Potsdamer Platz, and the other by Lake Taupo, the Darling Ranges of Western Australia and the loneliness of the Caledonian bush. To him New Caledonia is not the tourist isle of sunshine, coral lagoon, sandy beaches and waving palms, but an Isle of Unrest with a fascinating tale of treachery and shipwreck, massacre and sudden death—a tale never before told in English. One of the newest countries in the world, its primitive past merges closely with its present, the savage period here described leaving a lasting stamp on the character and traditions of its French and British stock, who have mingled to some extent with the native Melanesian. And in fact, no pioneer country has had a more bloody or dramatic history.

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